THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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EXCLUSIVE: TOM KRISTENSEN

The iconic Mr Le Mans tackles the MN readers' questions p14

TIN-TOPS ARE BACK WITH A BANG!

Metal was crunched as the BTCC came back to life

Team boss hails his driver's development as Ford Focus man tops the standings after three rounds

BLUNDELL TIPS HILL TO CHALLENGE FOR 2021 BTCC TITLE

Hill took to three podiums in the touring car openers

By Matt James

Team chief Mark Blundell has praised Jake Hill's maturity and talent as the British Touring Car Championship driver walked away from the opening weekend at Thruxton with three podiums and the points lead.

Hill finished third three times and his final rostrum came after a stunning drive on slick tyres in changeable conditions. He sits one point clear of Josh Cook, who took his BTC Racing Honda Civic to two wins in Hampshire.

Blundell, who contested the BTCC as team-mate to Hill in 2019 before forming the MB Motorsport squad in 2020, said that Hill would only get stronger as the season progresses.

"There was such a level-headedness about the way Jake approached the races, there is a real maturity in his driving," said the 1992 Le Mans winner Blundell. "Even in the tough conditions in the final race, he got his head down and got on with the job. I was listening in on the pits-to-car radio, and he handled it perfectly.

"The exciting thing is that we performed really strongly as a team, and there will be even more to come from Jake and his team-mate Ollie Jackson, that's for sure."

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Trick tactics help Mercedes star secure glory p4

INTERVIEW

LLEWELLIN JR: FOLLOWING IN THE RIGHT WHEELTRACKS

Why David's son is ready to prove his mettle p20

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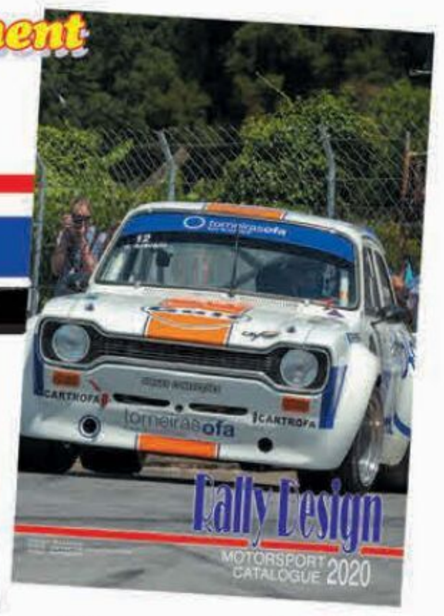

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Oil line bulkhead grommet		£5.10	£6.12
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PLEASE NOTE: All prices in Red are EXCLUSIVE OF VAT

COMMENT

Photo: JMS Photographic, Jakob Ebrey, Motorsport Images

The BTCC champion Sutton was in a spin after just three corners of the 2021 contest

BTCC IS BACK WITH A BANG

It took only half a lap for the first radio call for a safety car in this season's British Touring Car Championship. It was the opening chapter in what was a dramatic weekend at Thruxton in Hampshire with three barnstorming races reminding everyone just what they had been missing.

There were several drivers who laid down credentials for a championship challenge, while those who might have been expected to hit the ground running were left slipping and sliding around or, in some cases, facing in the wrong direction or even connecting with the barriers.

But what it also went to prove was just how hard it is to win Britain's highest profile motor racing championship, and that is counting without the changeable UK weather. There were no option tyres to take into account at the curtain-raiser at Thruxton either. Things will only get tougher from here.

Anyone who watched the action would have been catching their breath. What is great news is that, as we stand at the moment, this will be the last BTCC meeting to be held behind closed doors due to the restrictions in place thanks to the pandemic. The next meeting at Snetterton in the middle of June will finally see (some) fans click through the turnstiles.

The drivers will tell you that they are there to get on with a job, and they will perform at their optimum whether there are trackside enthusiasts or not. That is nonsense. The sense of occasion provided by the supporters pressed to the fence, and the heightened sense of importance of landing a result in front of thousands of spectators, can't be underestimated. We can't wait.

Elsewhere in this issue, our question-and-answer incumbent is a driver we have been after for a while. Hal Ridge managed to track down the nine-time Le Mans winner Tom Kristensen and put the MN readers' questions to the Great Dane. To win Le Mans, you have to be lucky. To win it multiple times, it takes more than luck. To win it nine times is almost implausible.

Kristensen is not just a former racing driver. He is a legend, and he is a genuine motorsport enthusiast. It is not just about earning dollar for the man, it is about a deep-rooted passion for racing that goes back to his childhood, as he explains from page 14.

Luke Barry catches up with up-and-coming rally man Tom Llewellin, who is aiming to follow in the wheeltracks of his famous father David, while Graham Keilloh finds drivers who are still banging the drum for the UK's most successful and long-lasting single-seater category, Formula Ford 1600. Enjoy.

Matt James
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Cook's perfect recipe for BTCC success

Honda man doubles up at the British opening touring car weekend of 2021

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RACING NEWS

HAMILTON'S EXTRA HALT VANQUISHES VERSTAPPEN

Lewis: learned about Max

Mercedes outsmarts Red Bull in a Spanish strategic fight between F1 2021's two dominant protagonists

Photos: Motorsport Images, Jakob Ebrey, Porsche Motorsport

Hamilton, propelled by fresher rubber, got past long-time leader Verstappen late on

By Graham Keilloh

Formula 1 World champion Lewis Hamilton claimed his third win in four races in 2021 in last weekend's Spanish Grand Prix after beating rival Max Verstappen in a strategic battle.

The Barcelona race continued this year's theme of the Mercedes and Red Bull team leaders having a tight fight for victory. But this one was resolved on the pitwall, with Hamilton beating long-time leader Verstappen via an extra pitstop.

Hamilton – who'd claimed his landmark 100th pole position the day before – led from the line but Verstappen ambushed him for the lead at turn one and led by 1.5 seconds at the end of the opening lap.

Hamilton though gradually hauled his foe in. Verstappen pitted first, on lap 24 of 66, but his stop was slow at 4.2s, his team boss Christian Horner explaining that Verstappen had "called himself in" which caught his team somewhat on the hop.

It looked therefore that Hamilton could pit and rejoin in first, but he instead stayed out for another five laps. He emerged from his stop 5.5s shy of Verstappen but quickly got onto his tail. However in the turbulence he was unable to make a challenge for the place.

The crucial twist awaited on lap 42, when Hamilton pitted for a second time. It left him with a 23s gap to close in as many laps, and it was soon clear he was well ahead of that target on his fresher tyres. He cruised past Verstappen DRS-assisted with six laps left. Verstappen then himself pitted again and took the fastest lap point.

Hamilton's team-mate Valtteri Bottas completed the podium. McLaren's Brit Lando Norris finished eighth.

"I'm continuing to love this battle we are having," Hamilton said. "As soon as we got passed in turn one, I was like, 'OK, switch into a different mode'. I learned a lot about Max today, perhaps more than all the other races put together. Great, great teamwork from all of us. Coming back from 20-odd seconds wasn't easy but it was the right one in the end."

Results

1 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1h33m07.680s; 2 Max Verstappen (Red Bull-Honda) +15.841s; 3 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes); 4 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari); 5 Sergio Perez (Red Bull-Honda); 6 Daniel Ricciardo (McLaren-Mercedes); 7 Carlos Sainz Jr (Ferrari); 8 Lando Norris (McLaren-Mercedes); 9 Esteban Ocon (Alpine-Renault); 10 Pierre Gasly (AlphaTauri-Honda). **Championship:** 1 Hamilton 94; 2 Verstappen 80; 3 Bottas 47; 4 Norris 41; 5 Leclerc 40; 6 Perez 32. **Next race:** Monaco Grand Prix, May 23

IN BRIEF

Monaco FE magic
Reigning Formula E champion Antonio Felix da Costa of Techeetah claimed an exhilarating Monaco E-Prix win last Saturday with a last-lap pass of Jaguar's Mitch Evans. The electric championship used the principality's full grand prix layout for the first time, and the race contained six changes for the lead.

Hauger's haul
Red Bull junior Dennis Hauger of Prema Racing leads the FIA Formula 3 standings after its Barcelona season-opening triple-header. Hauger dominated race three and leads his British team-mate Olli Caldwell in the table by two points. Caldwell won a madcap reversed-grid race two while the opener, also with a reversed grid, was won by Russian Alexander Smolyar of ART.

Carlos in hospital
Twelve-time Formula 1 race-winner Carlos Reutemann has been moved to intensive care in an Argentinian hospital after suffering from digestive bleeding, with his condition reported to be worsening as MN went to press. The 79-year-old politician was last week admitted to the Sanatorio Santa Fe, then was transferred to the intensive care section of a hospital in Rosario.

BTC RACING LOOKING FOR NEW RECRUIT AHEAD OF SNETTERTON

The BTC Racing British Touring Car Championship team will have a new permanent driver in its line-up in time for the next rounds of the competition after recruiting Dan Cammish as a one-off stand in at Thruxton last weekend,

Cammish joined the squad in place of Michael Crees, who parted ways with the Brackley concern in the days leading up to the opening event. The stand-in helped the team to a 1-2 result in the second race in Hampshire but he will now return to his commitments in Porsche racing. The next rounds of the BTCC are at Snetterton in the middle of June.

BTC Racing boss Steve Dudman said: "There are about six people in the mix to get the seat for the rest of 2021. I am looking for a driver who is a real racer – that is really important to me – and someone who wants to commit to BTC Racing for the long term."

Cammish was back in the BTCC with BTC as Thruxton one-off

Revered names Porsche and Penske announced they will unite in sportscars

PORSCHE AND PENSKE JOIN FORCES FOR WEC AND IMSA ATTACKS

Porsche and Penske will join up for the German marque's forthcoming top-level sportscar racing return in the World Endurance Championship and IMSA SportsCar Championship with its new LMDh prototype.

Porsche with the legendary US team, under the name Porsche Penske Motorsport, will in a multi-year deal will run two LMDh prototypes competing for overall victories.

Penske and Porsche have a track record of US sportscar success, Penske winning the Can-Am title with the Porsche 917 in 1972 and '73, then with a Porsche RS Spyder claiming an American Le Mans Series LMP2 title hat-trick between 2006 and '08 and taking 11 outright victories.

Porsche Motorsport head Fritz Enzinger said: "In [Penske's] long list of victories to date, the name Le Mans has been missing. I hope that we will finally be able to chalk up this success as of 2023 with Porsche Penske Motorsport. This would then mark Porsche's 20th overall victory at the Sarthe – a dream come true."

Roger Penske added: "This is a proud day for our entire Penske organisation. We have represented Porsche on the track or in our businesses for more than six decades. The heritage and success we have enjoyed together is unparalleled throughout our history."

BLUNDELL TARGETS TITLES AFTER STRONG BTCC CURTAIN RAISER

Formula 1 driver Mark Blundell says his MB Motorsport team is in the hunt for the overall drivers' title as well as the British Touring Car Championship's manufacturer-constructor spoils after three podium finishes at Thruxton last weekend.

The team is in its second season in the BTCC and has switched to running two Motorbase Performance-built Ford Focus cars. Three podium finishes by Jake Hill and further points added by team-mate Ollie Jackson mean the squad, which is based in Kent, has stolen a march on BMW and Toyota in the manufacturer-constructors division. Hill leads the overall points standings by a single mark after the results in Hampshire.

Blundell said: "The team has performed so strongly over the course of the weekend. Jake drove with great maturity in some tough circumstances, and Ollie was unlucky in the opening race and then showed his resolve by fighting back for points in the next two events.

"It has been a really positive start for us and don't forget this is just the start of our journey with these new cars. We are very upbeat for the rest of the season already."

The next rounds of the championship take place at Snetterton on June 12-13.

F1 ace Blundell says more is to come from MB Motorsport

Photo: Rachel Bourne, Jakob Ebrey, Amy Lentz Photography, Graham Holbon

Williams: gets track time

Williams chasing FF1600 crown

BRITISH F4 WINNER WILLIAMS SEEKING NATIONAL FF1600 CROWN

American is looking for championship glory in a full National Formula Ford 1600 campaign with successful Oldfield Motorsport, but still hopes for BRDC F3 outings

By Graham Keilloh

British Formula 4 race-winner and BRDC Formula 3 competitor Carter Williams will complete a full National Formula Ford 1600 campaign in 2021 with Oldfield Motorsport and aims for the title.

American Williams completed a part-season in BRDC F3 last year with JHR Developments, and hopes to complete some BRDC F3 rounds this year where there are no clashes.

Williams, 22, is no stranger to National FF1600, competing in the championship with Don Hardman Racing in 2018 as well as in the Formula Ford Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy. Williams also completed a Croft round with Oldfield in 2019, the year in which he took three British F4 wins with JHR.

He told Motorsport News: "We tried to run [British] F3 this year, that was the main goal, but we just didn't have the budget for it. So we were going to come back and maybe do a few races and also do F4 coaching with JHR.

"And a couple of weeks before I came over, James [Oldfield, team boss] didn't have any drivers for [National] this year and wanted to take a run at the championship and offered us a deal. I figured it would be a bit more track time and would be positive. I love James and the team, so when they called it was a no brainer.

"[In BRDC F3] we'd like to do maybe a Spa round, or Silverstone or Donington, something that doesn't clash with F4 for the coaching."

ULTIMATE SPEED ASTON BACK FOR BRITISH GT SILVER-AM PART-CAMPAIGN

Ultimate Speed's Aston Martin will contest the majority of this year's British GT championship as the latest to join the GT3 contest's new-for-2021 Silver-Am category.

The team's Vantage GT3 made its debut at Donington Park last season and also contested Silverstone's season finale. Now the squad with its driver pairing Matt Manderson and Mike Brown are set for their biggest-ever British GT campaign after confirming entries for four of 2021's seven events. They will contest the Brands Hatch season opener on May 22-23 as well as Donington's season closer in October. They also will make mid-year appearances at Donington and Snetterton.

"First and foremost we want to have fun so we decided to increase our commitment this year after switching from the old to new Vantage in 2020," Brown said. "We should be closer to the established pairings with more testing and mileage, and Silver-Am really gives us something to aim at."

MORE PARTS OF UK RESUME MOTORSPORT

Motorsport has resumed in various more parts of the UK as Covid lockdown restrictions continue to be eased.

Motorsport in Scotland returned on the May 1-2 weekend with several events including an Autotest organised by East Ayrshire Car Club, Tyro Trial by the Buchan Off Road Drivers Club, Treasure Hunt organised by the Tay 4×4 Off Road Club and a trial run by the Edzell Off-Road Club.

The weekend previously competition resumed in Northern Ireland with a popular Larne Motor Club Autotest, as well as resumed on Jersey, with the opening round of its kart championship plus a Jersey Motorcycle and Light Car Club rally. It also resumed on the Isle of Man with the opening round of the Mylchreests 4×4 Challenge, organised by the Isle of Man Four Wheel Drive Club.

Motorsport in England and Guernsey resumed at the start of April. The picture for resumption in Wales remained unclear as MN went to press.

Larne Autotest got NI motorsport resumed

PICKUPS PAY TRIBUTE TO LEGEND STEVENS

The Pickup Truck Racing championship paid tribute to late champion Pete Stevens at its recent Mallory Park season-opener meeting. Thundersaloon and Hot Rod champion Stevens, who passed away last year, took the Pickups crown in 2009 and remained competitive in the category since, as well as was a highly popular and ambassadorial figure. At Mallory, as the Pickups returned to competition for the first time since 2019, Stevens' brother David in his honour stood on pole position with Pete's helmet.

RALLY CO-DRIVER CRUICKSHANK TO TRY SCOTTISH C1 CUP

Established Scottish rallying co-driver Michael Cruickshank is expanding his repertoire this year to compete himself in circuit racing in the Scottish Motor Racing Club's Scottish C1 Cup.

"It's [circuit racing] an itch that I need to scratch," Cruickshank told MN, "it's something that I wanted to do for a long time but just never had the budget or the facilities.

"I've got a car that's been run by JDC Motorsport in Cumbria, Joe Cruttenden, an old rally contact.

"The C1s seems the cheapest way into circuit racing. Also the endurance side interests me, if I decided that I quite like this it's what I'd like to look towards, some of the endurance stuff: Spa 24 hours, Silverstone 24 hours. And the fact that there's a Scottish championship: I'm only 45 minutes away from Knockhill.

"I've done no circuit stuff at all apart from my ARDS! [My first run] will probably be the weekend of the [round one] racing! We're doing the pre-event test on the Saturday before.

"We're starting from scratch, so just to finish the rounds [will be good]. Just to enjoy it, that's the aim."

Cruickshank (l) trying C1s

Rising Brit Linscott one of three to star in TV series

BRITISH DRIVER LINSCOTT TO FEATURE IN TV SERIES

British Formula 4 United States driver Emily Linscott is featuring on a forthcoming television docu-series about up-and-coming female athletes, called 'Making (Her)Story'.

Motorsport UK Academy's Linscott competes in F4 US for successful Kiwi Motorsport after winning a PMH Powering Diversity scholarship. The TV series focuses on three female competitors in male-dominated sports, also putting the spotlight on NASCAR's Natalie Decker and jockey Hollie Doyle.

Linscott will be filmed throughout this season and the series will be released in the US next year then internationally.

Linscott said: "I'd like to think that this TV series will help inspire other girls to get out on track or to do stuff they thought only boys were allowed to do, maybe even get more parents to think about taking their daughters on the race track as well as their sons, because without the parents supporting the girls at a young age, there's going to be very little chance of getting a girl into the top levels of sport. I can't wait to see the end result, it's going to be fantastic!"

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RACING NEWS

Photo: Gary Hawkins, Dickon Siddall, Jon Elsey, BTC Racing. Excler8

Morgan Short battled for wins

Son of GT and endurance racer Martin Short looked at home at front

SHORT PAYS TRIBUTE TO SON AFTER STEP UP TO MG CUP SHARP END

Martin Short praises son Morgan's fast learning on frontrunning debut and promises there's more pace to come

By Graham Keilloh

Morgan Short, son of famous racer and team boss Martin, stepped up seamlessly to frontrunning competition for the first time in MG Car Club's MG Cup last month driving an MG ZS 180.

Morgan last year in MG Cup raced a lower-class Rover 216 GTi, and upgraded to the top-class MG ZS 180 for last month's Brands Hatch 2021 season opener. Initially only on the Brands reserve list, Morgan led both races and in both finished second on the road, though was relegated to third in race one with a track-limits penalty.

Martin said: "I was looking to try and move him up into the sharp end, and Martin [Slingsby] said that he had this car, it was a trackday car. So we went to Blyton and we were really impressed how great it handled. Then we went to Silverstone and we could see that on the lap times from previous MG Cup meetings that he [Morgan] was right on it.

"It hasn't evolved much more than a trackday car. So we're going to go away and make the car faster. It's great to see Morgan going as fast as he does. I don't even bother getting in the car now because wherever I go he's two seconds faster!"

Morgan added: "It's brilliant. For a big heavy car it handles really well. The car was extremely understeer-y in the first race – with that big V6 hanging over the front wheels. Second race we made some changes to try and reduce some understeer which really helped."

MG TROPHY CHAMPION ROSS HAS LEFT-HAND-DRIVE DEBUT

Twice MG Trophy champion Graham Ross felt he adapted well after in last month's Brands Hatch meeting becoming the first in the category to race a left-hand-drive car.

Ross in his new MG ZR 190, after a qualifying off, only finished 12th in race one with a tyre problem and fourth in race two. He was unsure the extent that adapting to left-hand drive explained the results.

"It's a bit disappointing," he said. "The front end of the car is not right, after the off in qualifying it hasn't got the right camber on.

"In both races, it [left-hand drive] was fine. It took a bit of time yesterday in testing to get used to it. Sitting on the left is not a problem, you get all the apexes fine. It's the gearchange, you've got to get used to that, and it took me all day yesterday to get used to it, I thought I would maybe get accustomed to it quicker. But at Brands it was fine, it wasn't a problem, it was pretty intuitive.

"I don't know whether that has affected the weekend, that I've been pegged back with that? I don't really know. It was just a bit lacklustre."

Double MG Trophy champion Graham Ross now sits on the left

Tanner: second on programme

TANNER SET FOR JCW MINI CAMPAIGN ON BTC PROGRAMME

Joe Tanner is set for a full JCW Mini Challenge campaign after becoming the second recruit to British Touring Car Championship team BTC Racing's new driver programme.

Scottish racer Tanner joins Lydia Walmsley in BTC's squad to contest the Mini Challenge's headline JCW class. The BTCC support category's season begins next month at Snetterton.

Tanner is a Scottish Formula Ford champion and was runner up in 2013's Scottish Mini Cooper Cup. He also took pole on his JCW debut last year at Knockhill. Tanner with his BTC move returns to full-time racing this year, after making only selected race outings in recent seasons.

The new CityCar Cup has, as intended, attracted plenty newcomers

CITYCAR CUP INTRODUCES NOVICE TROPHY AFTER ROOKIE INFLUX

The CityCar Cup has introduced a Novice Racer Trophy in response to a high volume of rookie competitors joining the British Racing and Sports Car Club's new cost-effective tin-top championship.

In advance of its 2021 season opener last weekend at Donington Park, CityCar Cup's near-maximum entry included 21 first-time race licence holders, accounting for over half the grid. With the Novice Racer Trophy award the highest-placed novice racer at each round will get a trophy, plus there will be an end-of-season award for the highest novice in the final championship standings.

BRSCC's head of formulae development Greg Graham said: "The main driving forces behind [CityCar Cup was it] would be attractive to new racers, [and] offered ease of access and the lowest possible cost of entry whilst also delivering a true 'race car' experience. The level of involvement we're seeing from people who have never raced before has been fantastic."

FRONTRUNNER BURGESS TO RETURN IN MG CUP

MG Trophy frontrunner Jason Burgess is to return to MG Car Club competition at next month's Silverstone round racing an MG ZR 170 in the MG Cup.

Metro class champion Burgess hasn't raced since finishing runner-up in 2018's MG Trophy in an MG ZR 190. The 170 was raced by his son Fred in MG Trophy, before Fred switched to his dad's 190 when the 170's engine failed last year in testing on the eve of the Donington Park round.

"I had a very good season in 2018, I won half the races," Jason told MN.

"You put a lot of energy into that, and my son wanted to have a go so we put Fred into the 170 and he did very well.

"Hopefully I'm going to do more of the rounds after Silverstone if all goes well, which can't see why it won't do.

"I chose the MG Cup because I'm engaged in helping Fred [in MG Trophy], I would sooner help Fred in that race and partake in watching the race.

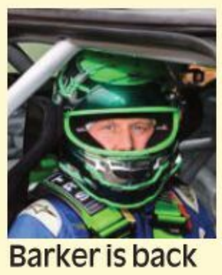
"[MG Cup] for the 170 does look a good championship. I would like to think I'll be getting some silverware, but I've never driven a 170. It will be different."

Burgess (16) will be back in 170

RADICAL CHAMP BARKER JOINS JCW FULL TIME

Radical Challenge champion Oliver Barker will step into full-time Mini Challenge JCW competition for 2021 after joining Excelr8 Motorsport's multi-car line-up.

Barker, who took his dominant Radical crown in 2017, made a one-off JCW appearance last year in the season's penultimate round at Snetterton, and he impressed by qualifying seventh and taking a best finish of sixth.



Barker is back

Barker said: "Having never raced a front-wheel-drive race car before my outing at Snetterton last year, I knew I was throwing myself in at the deep end. I want to go up against the best drivers and I'm super competitive, so we'll see what happens."

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

RALLY NEWS

Photos: Toyota Gazoo Racing, Hyundai Motorsport

Ogier is likely to contest selected events next term

Latvala has his eyes on the future WRC driver line-up

TOYOTA KEEN TO FIRM UP ITS DRIVER OPTIONS

Team boss Latvala considers the future with 2022 part-timer Ogier

By Graham Lister

Toyota doesn't want to lose Briton Elfyn Evans and would allow Sebastien Ogier to pick and choose the events he contests in the World Rally Championship next season.

Speaking to MN, Toyota team boss Jari-Matti Latvala admitted that he's resigned to Ogier going part time from 2022. But he confirmed that the Japanese manufacturer is prepared to change its policy that currently prevents its factory drivers from undertaking partial programmes to prevent the reigning World champion from joining a rival.

"At the moment we have a fantastic driver line-up and our target is to keep the same drivers," Latvala told Motorsport News. "Sebastien has said he would like to do some rallies or even half of the championship [in 2022] so we are going to negotiate with him and then see [if] we need a driver that will do the second half of the championship.

"There are certain events he really enjoys and would like to drive next year. Our policy is we have wanted a driver who will do the full season, but we need to remember that if we want to fight for the manufacturers' championship, it's a very good asset to have Sebastien in one of the cars to bring the points. It would be a very good option that you use Sebastien and then one other driver and select the events between them. That would be the target."

Latvala explained that he would be open to an external recruit to share the season with Ogier if it's decided that Takamoto Katsuta, Toyota's development driver who is not currently eligible to score makes' points, isn't ready to step up to full factory status by 2022.

"Taka has been taking nice steps forward and I can see in the future he will be one of the top three drivers in the official team, but is he ready next year, that I can't give the answer. And do you want to put him under that pressure because he doesn't have so much experience in a World Rally Car? These are the subjects we have to discuss internally and decide if we need to consider a driver from outside this team."

Asked by MN if there are suitable candidates available, Latvala said: "It's more limited now Hyundai has selected its drivers. But there are still drivers in the market who will be suitable for our team. At the moment, we don't have a date [to make an announcement] but we now need to hurry up this subject a little bit."

Evans relaxed about his prospects in a Yaris

In the aftermath of Hyundai announcing Thierry Neuville and Ott Tanak have signed long-term deals to stay put (*see story below*), MN spoke to Jari-Matti Latvala about Toyota's plans and what the future holds for Elfyn Evans.

Hyundai's move leaves Evans as the only WRC A-lister – aside from Sebastien Ogier – currently without a confirmed ride for next season.

Latvala acknowledged that the introduction of the Rally1 rules and the ongoing testing of the new-for-2022 Yaris makes it even more important for the Welshman to remain onboard.

"The experience [Elfyn] has done and the steps he has been able to take is really positive," Latvala told MN. "In the previous [Croatia] rally he was fighting for the victory with Sebastien. The way he is going forward, the way he was already last year close to being the champion [means I want to keep him] absolutely,.

"You [also] want to have a driver who is doing the development with the hybrid car [who is the] same guy driving the rallies next year."

With Hyundai effectively full – as well as Neuville and Tanak, teenager Oliver Solberg will still be under contract next year, while Craig Breen and Dani Sordo are regarded as highly dependable members of the squad – a return to M-Sport is Evans' only other option for next season.

However, the 32-year-old told MN leaving Toyota after two seasons isn't part of his thinking ahead of back-to-back WRC rounds in Portugal and Sardinia.

"I'm happy where I am, the team has been great, but you never know in this game what might happen," Evans said. "We're coming up to back-to-back events so I'm trying to focus on them because there's so little time between them and we're trying to do as much preparation as possible. I'm pretty relaxed about next year.

Evans: focused on rallies

"We have new regulations coming and perhaps it's more in everyone's interests to have it sorted a bit earlier than normal. But not a lot of talks have taken place yet. Only when we get down to evaluating everything will I think about it. The logical thing to do is to stay and develop the car with the current team."

TEN FOR A RALLY1 RIDE

Motorsport News considers 10 worthy candidates for a factory Rally1 seat in 2022.

Craig Breen (Ireland, 31): Yet to register his breakthrough WRC win but equally waiting for the perfect opportunity. To call Breen committed is a massive understatement.

Adrien Fourmaux (France, 26): In only his fifth season of rallying, Fourmaux is miles behind in terms of experience but way ahead when potential alone is considered.

Nikolay Gryazin (Russia, 23): Still some rough edges to knock off and a little prone to crashing but Malcolm Wilson didn't hand him a World Rally Car test for the fun of it.

Takamoto Katsuta (Japan, 28): Croatia stage win double underlined the ex-Formula 3 racer's obvious potential. Perhaps 2022 is a year too soon while he finds more consistency.

Esapekka Lappi (Finland, 30): A WRC winner and proven frontrunner. Dominated WRC2 on Arctic Rally Finland and keen on a return to the top table.

Kris Meeke (Northern Ireland, 41): Meeke's arduous fitness regime means his age isn't a factor, while his five WRC wins, blinding speed and technical nous should not be overlooked.

Andreas Mikkelsen (Norway, 31): Using a combined WRC2/European Rally Championship campaign to get his career back on track after leaving Hyundai following a two-year stint. Still has plenty to offer.

Kalle Rovanpera (Finland, 20): All but confirmed as a factory driver but it's important to highlight the young Finn's worthiness for Rally1 seat time.

Oliver Solberg (Sweden, 19): His performances in year one of his two-year Hyundai deal mean he continues to talk himself into a Rally1 ride next season.

Teemu Suninen (Finland, 27): Hasn't enjoyed the best of times in recent campaigns and his stage one Monte shunt was a blow but the talent remains. Needs a big result now.

STAR SIGNINGS BOLSTER HYUNDAI'S ATTACK ON WRC SUMMIT

Hyundai has tripled its efforts to dominate the World Rally Championship's new-for-2022 hybrid era with a week of box-office signings.

It has tied down existing lead duo Thierry Neuville and Ott Tanak's to multi-year deals and also recruited technical mastermind Christian Loriaux from M-Sport. Neuville and Tanak will carry out the bulk of the testing of the Rally1-spec Hyundai i20 N as part of the new arrangement, while Loriaux – who has penned big winners for Ford and Subaru in the past – joins in an advisory role with the new car his main focus, although he will continue to work for M-Sport on its Bentley GT project, according to reports.

"Working with these two talented drivers in the future demonstrates our determination and ambition to succeed in the World Rally Championship and reaffirms Hyundai's strong commitment to the series as it enters its new hybrid era," said team chief Andrea Adamo. "I thank Thierry for his loyalty to Hyundai Motorsport since 2014 and Ott for trusting us and our work.

Neuville's back

"We are beginning the crucial phase of testing of our Rally1 challenger in the near future so together with Thierry and Ott, we can execute a smooth testing plan. We can't also forget that we still have a job to do together this year as well as thinking ahead to 2022 and beyond."

Belgian Neuville said he was "happy to sign a multi-year contract", adding: "[Hyundai's] approach and ambitions on the new WRC hybrid regulation, is also very promising. I love rallying and I'm not ready to stop."

Estonian Tanak, who joined Hyundai from Toyota as the 2019 champion, added: "The hybrid regulations means everyone will start from a blank page. Hyundai Motorsport has a huge knowledge of hybrid and electric technologies which will play a big role when we start developing the new Rally1 car. We have still a job to do this year – making sure we send off the current WRC cars in the best way."

IRISHMAN McERLEAN READY TO FACE RALLY PORTUGAL CHALLENGES

Josh McErlean is set to start his first gravel-based WRC event in Portugal next week with his eyes "opened" following an outing on the opening round of the national championship earlier this month.

Partnered by fellow Irishman Noel O'Sullivan, McErlean finished 11th overall on Rali Terras d'Aboboreira in a PCRS Rallysport-run Hyundai i20 R5.

McErlean will be reunited with regular co-driver Keaton Williams for Rally of Portugal and will be eligible for WRC3 points.

The driver said: "It's no secret that we are still eager to learn new rallies, new surfaces and get as much experience as we can under our belts this season. Being able to contest WRC Portugal is a real privilege. Coming back to the WRC will be a great marker for me to see how I've improved.

"I can't thank all my supporters and the Motorsport Ireland Rally Academy enough for this opportunity."

McErlean made his WRC debut on Rally Monza 2020 and has been enrolled into the Hyundai Junior Driver programme.

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RALLY NEWS

Solberg: gaining mileage

SOLBERG JR RETURNS TO R5 FOR PORTUGAL

Oliver Solberg will get another shot in a Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC – but not until he's driven the make's i20 R5 again.

Solberg, 19, and co-driver Aaron Johnston have been entered on Rally Italy next month in a 2020-specification Hyundai from French squad 2C Competition.

It will be Solberg's first outing in a World Rally Car on gravel following his impressive run to seventh on his first World Rally Car debut on Arctic Rally Finland in February.

With Johnston missing the Lapland event after returning a positive Covid-19 test result, Sardinia-based Rally Italy will be his debut in the WRC's top tier.

For next week's Rally Portugal, the Swedish-Irish pair will compete in a Rally2 Hyundai for their event debut and their first WRC2 scoring round of the season.

MOFFETT READY TO PLAY IT SMART IN HIS QUEST FOR BRITISH RALLY TITLE

Irish Tarmac champion wants to win the BRC despite his unfamiliarity with some events

Photos: Hyundai Motorsport, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

Moffett says he will capitalise on Tarmac

By Jason Craig

Irish Tarmac champion Sam Moffett believes that drivers who have a clear strategy and can play smart over the course of this season's British Rally Championship will be best placed to challenge for the title.

Moffett is one of several Irish drivers to commit to the BRC in the absence of the ITRC in 2021, a list that includes his brother Josh, Desi Henry, Joe McGonigle and Garry Jennings. This will be the first time Moffett has committed to a full BRC programme, although he has experience of the Cambrian Rally and is familiar with the nature of the Ulster Rally stages.

"That is going to help me," Moffett told MN, "so those are two rallies I think I can do well on. The Mull Rally is another event where, with it being new to a lot of people, my experience on Tarmac can help.

"Those rallies I'm not familiar with it will be a case of trying to grind out a good points-scoring result. It's about pacing yourself and playing it smart because I'd rather be BRC champion than a rally winner.

"I think the opening round at Oulton Park could throw up a few surprises as to who finishes where for the simple reason there are no jumps or surface changes. That suits some drivers better than others."

Moffett – who will be navigated by Keith Moriarty – has yet to decide on which Rally2 car he will campaign. However, these have been narrowed down to a Ford Fiesta, a Hyundai i20 or Volkswagen Polo.

"All of them have their strong points but they also have question marks as well," he said. "The VW no longer has factory support, so that immediately puts a doubt in your mind.

"It's the package I am after, really," he added. "There is no point in having the best car, the fastest car, and the team that is running it is one of the worst there is. I can't justify buying a car at the minute, so going out and hiring one from a team I know will do a good job is the most sensible option for me."

PODIUM BOOST FOR INGRAM AHEAD OF RALLY PORTUGAL OUTING

Chris Ingram's stage-winning run to a podium finish on Rali Terras d'Aboboreira allowed him to quell the "nerves and anxiety" he endured on his return to international competition at Rally2 level on last month's Croatia Rally.

Ahead of the Zagreb event, Ingram hadn't competed in a Rally2 car since he won the European championship on Rally Hungary in November 2019, and admitted the time away made for a tough comeback after he finished fifth in class in a SXM Competition-run Skoda Fabia Evo.

With Ross Whittock co-driving, Ingram finished third on the Portuguese championship season opener, 11.1s behind Hyundai Motorsport's winning WRC2 driver Ole Christian Veiby and 8.3s down on highly rated Spanish champion Pepe Lopez.

"I struggled like never before [in Croatia] after such a long layoff and the relentlessness of rally life, aiming for perfection corner after corner, stage after stage was a huge shock to the system physically and mentally," Ingram said. "Not much can prepare your brain for the World Rally Championship apart from driving at that level consistently and I've not been doing any proper driving for a very, very long time.

"One week later, we've bounced back to take our first podium with the team on my first drive on gravel in almost two years against top level competition.

"Shaking off the rust, as well as beating the nerves and anxiety of that first drive back, was a bigger win than I could've hoped for. Bring on the next massive challenge on Rally of Portugal."

Ingram, above in Croatia, has gained more knowledge of Skoda

Perez Jr is preparing for his first full British campaign

STEVE PEREZ CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC OVER SON SEB'S BRC CHANCES

Steve Perez reckons his son Seb "might be a better rally driver than race driver" as Perez Jr prepares for his first-ever British Rally Championship assault in 2021.

Perez Jr, a former Ginetta and Porsche Carerra Cup GB racer, was meant to race for R-Motorsport in European GT4 this year before the team pulled out. However, he isn't new to rallying as he competed in the Junior 1000 series, has won several historic events and even drove the M-Sport Ford Fiesta Rally2 he will campaign this year on the 2019 Grizedale Stages, finishing fourth overall.

Perez Sr, the 2014 BTRDA Gold Star champion, told MN: "I was chatting to Malcolm Wilson over a bit of dinner and at some stage we thought he [Seb] might be a better rally driver than race driver. The car is being run by M-Sport and obviously I've got a long history running M-Sport Focuses and we'll see how the first couple of rounds go."

Asked how competitive his son could be, Perez Sr said: "It's very difficult to tell. He's done very well on historic Tarmac rallies but he's up against a lot of competition this year, it's probably one of the best entries I've seen for years in BRC so it's incredibly competitive. And I think it's very much a learning year and we might even try and pop in the odd World championship round if possible. I'd like to see how he gets on somewhere like Catalunya because, on Spanish Tarmac, he's really impressed me."

Perez will contest the Historic Masters Festival at Brands Hatch the day before the opening round of the BRC at Oulton Park.

WRC GOES GREEN FOR 2022 WITH NEW FUEL SUPPLIER

The World Rally Championship will switch to 100% sustainable fuel from next season.

German firm P1 Racing Fuels has secured a three-year deal with the FIA after winning a tender, approved by a recent World Motor Sport Council vote.

All Rally1 cars will use a fossil-free hydrocarbon-based fuel, with a blend of synthetic and bio-fuel components.

The FIA and the WRC Promoter hope that the move to a sustainable fuel will "ensure a marked reduction in net carbon dioxide emissions but has the same performance characteristics and the closest possible price point to the current fuel", according to last week's announcement.

OBITUARY

Ian Hughes 1954-2021

Motorsport News was saddened to hear of Ian Hughes' passing last week. Hughes was a prominent figure within Welsh rallying and a threat in the UK National championship throughout the 1980s.

His driving career started in an Escort but it's perhaps his giant-killing drives in a Talbot – Sunbeam, Avenger or Samba – that he was best known. He was undoubtedly a talent, but despite some international exposure that included a trip to Sweden in 1988 with a Mazda 323 4WD, Hughes never quite got the break he deserved.

After retiring from driving in 1989, he would go through it all again with his son Simon who reached the British Rally Championship in a Renault Clio S1600.

Hughes Sr renowned for his grin, always wanting to do his bit for the sport he loved. MN extends its condolences to Ian's family and many friends.

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Kevin Money, M-Sport, Hal Ridge and GRX

The Nicky Grist Stages is still on organisers' radar

NICKY GRIST ORGANISERS PUSHING FOR 2021 EVENT

Rally is still being plotted despite uncertainty from authorities

By Luke Barry

Organisers of the Nicky Grist Stages are pressing ahead with their plans to run the event on July 10 despite stricter coronavirus restrictions in Wales than in other corners of the UK.

The Nicky Grist Stages will be the second round of the British Rally Championship as well as the season-opener for both the BTRDA and Welsh Rally Championships. Rally Guide 1 has now been published with entries set to open on May 24 for potential registered championship competitors.

Clerk of the course, Neil Cross, said: "Although Wales is currently still in the high-risk Alert Level 3 [where outdoor activity is capped at 30 participants], it is successfully reopening and cautiously getting back to normal life. With a very low and decreasing number of new infections being recorded, and the majority of the population having been vaccinated, we are confident that, come July, we will be allowed to run the Nicky Grist Stages as planned. We are certainly confident enough to press on with our plans."

The 2021 event will be based in Builth Wells and features eight stages: four in the morning before service and then the same four repeated in the afternoon.

Nicky Grist said: "The clerk of the course has put together some great stages with some subtle changes in the route, some of which have not been used for a long while, and some sections have never been used on our rally before. The roads are in great condition and a brilliant day's competition will be in store for everyone."

The GRX squad will field its Hyundai machines in Holjes

GRONHOLM'S TEAM TO RUN IN SWEDEN

Marcus Gronholm's GRX World RX team will gear up for the forthcoming 2021 World RX series by racing in the third and fourth rounds of the RallyX Nordic this weekend at Holjes.

While the GRX squad is yet to announce its driver line-up for 2021, Niclas Gronholm and Hungarian Krisztian Sazbo, will drive for the outfit in Sweden this weekend. The team tested in Finland last week with its WRC-derived Hyundai i20s.

"We're doing the RallyX Nordic race to try some things out with the cars and drivers, and then we will see what happens for the rest of the year," said team manager Jussi Pinomaki.

"We got a lot out of racing in the RallyX Nordic event at Holjes last year, even if the results didn't go the way we wanted the whole weekend, we learned a lot and we want to do more of the same this week too."

MUNNINGS PLOTS NORDIC RX OUTING

Extreme E racer Catie Munnings will make her rallycross debut this weekend in the RallyX Nordic Crosscar series at Holjes in Sweden.

Munnings will drive for Hansen Motorsport's LifeLive Nordic team to glean more experience of wheel-to-wheel combat ahead of the next round of Extreme E in Senegal later this month.

Her Extreme E team-mate Timmy Hansen will support Munnings in her rallycross debut in which she will race a TN5 EVO Crosscar. "I have no idea what to expect," said Munnings. "I'll be happy to get around the lap cleanly and survive to the finish line.

"It's a new style for me but the most important thing is to gain more racing experience. It will be a great way to keep my driving skills sharp."

Creighton will twin JWRC campaign with UK outings

CREIGHTON FOR JBRC TO SUPPLEMENT JWRC CHALLENGE

Junior WRC driver William Creighton plans to enter as many Junior BRC rounds as he can this year to build up his pace and seat time for his World championship campaign.

"Everybody talks about it: with the JWRC, you have to get as much seat time as you can," Creighton told MN. "It [JBRC] works quite well as Mull and Nicky Grist are the weekend before a World rally so you can't get any better than that really. If we can make it happen, we'll try and give the championship as much a go as we can."

The Grampian Forest Stages clashes with Ypres Rally but only the best five from seven scores count towards the final championship tally, so Creighton could still claim the JBRC title that has eluded him in the past. But he doesn't see himself as the favourite.

"There's no guarantee at all that we're going to win it, there's going to be strong competition, there always is in the British championship," he said.

"The pace is going to be hot. That's what I need. I need to do these rallies where there is good competition to get seat time and try and improve the driving."

SCOT BINNIE BEDDING HIMSELF INTO UPRATED MITSUBISHI LANCER EVO

Harold Palin Stages winner Michael Binnie is plotting another Scottish Rally Championship assault in his uprated Mitsubishi Lancer E9 as well as some sporadic BTRDA rounds.

Binnie, whose recent victory was his second in succession after winning the Snowman Rally last March before Covid-19, has acquired John Morrison's old E9 which has a stronger engine than his old car, as well as a sequential gearbox and Reiger suspension.

His presence at Fulbeck was purely a "shakedown just to learn the car" as his ultimate goal is to win the Scottish title, but he told MN he wasn't sure if it'll be possible this year. "I would love to say yes but realistically I've never had that car on gravel, it'll be difficult to jump in and be completely competitive," Binnie said. "I'll probably end up being a bit slower than what I was in my old car until I get used to it, hopefully it'll not take long but certainly [the wins] have done the confidence no harm."

On further plans, he added: "We'd like to do the Nicky Grist, that would be a cool one to do and it's just before the Scottish [Rally] as well so it will be a good shakedown to do before the first gravel [SRC] round."

Binnie says that it will take time to familiarise with E9

O'DONOVAN RETURNS EX-GOLLOP MACHINE TO ITS FORMER GLORY

One of the most famous cars in British rallycross, the Peugeot 306 created by 1992 European Rallycross champion Will Gollop for the 1994 international campaign, made a successful return to competition last weekend.

A multiple British-title winning car in the hands of Gollop, Helmut Holfeld and Ollie O'Dovovan, Irish driver O'Donovan sold the 306 to Andy Scott in 2009. The machine made its most recent British RX appearances in 2013 and was driven by Scott at the Autosport International Show in 2017.

Having been bought back by O'Donovan recently, the car has been restored to its 2007 title-winning livery. As part of his plan to use the car in various events, O'Donovan contested a sprint a Debden Airfield on Sunday and collected the class victory.

The Peugeot 306 has been put back to original livery

"It was a sad day when I had to sell the Peugeot to Andy [Scott], I love that car, it's very special to me," said the Irishman. "I always told Andy that I wanted first refusal if he ever sold it.

"I'm a big believer that racing cars are designed to be used, and this car is held in such high regard by so many rallycross fans in the UK and Europe, I want people to be able to enjoy it too."

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB

RICHARD PLANT

Morgan racer
Age: 63 **Lives:** Stratford-on-Avon

Plant: Morgan fanatic

He's a true Morgan man
"It's been pretty much Morgans all the way through. I started racing in 2001 but have been involved with Morgans since the 1980s with road cars. The racing has just been in Morgans ever since. I once raced an MGB and I hated it. We've raced everything from the Series 1, the older stuff at Classic Le Mans, right up to the big 4.6-litre Class A car with 400bhp and everything in between."

It's a long love affair
"I went to school in Malvern in 1968 and was taken around the factory by Peter Morgan. I sat in the despatch bay in 1968 and I actually have one of the cars now that I sat in 53 years ago. I've got quite a lot of other road cars so we're into Jaguars and Healeys."

They have six Morgans
"I grew up with Morgans and always wanted a Morgan as a child. We've just sold one so we're down to six and we can race all of them. [Plant's son] William's brother Henry has one of the cars I used to race many, many years ago. He uses it as a road car, but that car was raced all over America and Europe when it was owned by Adrian Van der Kroft. They are twins and I am not encouraging Henry to race as well."

He loves the V8
"They're just easy. We've got lots of spare parts and they're a Meccano kit because there's not a lot you can do with them. it's just making sure that everything's bolted together. One of the main things for me is the Rover V8 engine by John Eales. In terms of bang for your buck, what else compares in a V8? The engine rebuilds are every two-and-a-half to three years, depending on how much you do."

70s Road Sports is the focus
"So we acquired the blue one this year because I did a swap with Russell Patterson. He had our big class A car and we swapped it for this plus I had some money out of a Scotsman! Now both William and I can race in 70s Road Sports in the same class. It is a great series. Julian Barter is back out again and some of the best racing I've ever had was against Julian. We really did have some monster races."

Photos: Paul Lawrence

The HWM was a winner at Donington Park

FISKEN RETURNS ICONIC HWM JAGUAR TO THE UK'S RACETRACKS

Rebuilt former works car has been brought back to life for 2021

By Paul Lawrence

One of the most famous racing HWM Jaguars is now back racing in period Mille Miglia livery and in the experienced hands of new owner Gregor Fisken.

The 1955 3.4-litre straight-six Jaguar engine car was a factory entry in the 1956 Mille Miglia for John Heath, who founded HWM with George Abecassis. Tragically Heath, who had a long-held ambition to compete in the Mille Miglia, crashed and was killed in the Italian road race.

The car, registered HWM 1, was duly rebuilt and raced as a works car in 1957 by a range of drivers including Dick Protheroe, Peter Blond and Alan Mann. At the end of the '57 season it was sold and then raced in many club events by Jon Bekaert.

More recently it was owned, raced and even rallied extensively by Kirk Rylands, who had it for 34 years from 1974 to 2008.

Now, Fisken has acquired this piece of British sportscar racing history and has had it rebuilt. Along with Sam Hancock, Fisken raced it to victory in the Woodcote Trophy at the Donington Historic Festival.

Fisken said: "It was a lockdown purchase! The engine was flat so we've given it a good engine and we've gone right through it and got it right, but we're still short on brakes so that's something we need to try and improve. I always felt that it should be back in Mille Miglia colours and with its 1956 race number of 545."

Fisken now plans to race it regularly in suitable events.

Jagermeister-backed Batmobile BMW CSL beauty in flight

BMW CSL Batmobile rides again

Patrick Blakeney-Edwards and Fred Wakeman had their debut in a stunning BMW CSL in the Historic Touring Car Challenge at Donington recently.

They have raced a Rover SD1 in the series in recent years but have now acquired one of the 10 original Schnitzer-built CSLs. It's a car that the Blakeney-Edwards team has prepared for the previous owner for the last decade.

"I love it," said Blakeney-Edwards of the Batmobile. "The Rover is now for sale and we're planning to do the same run of races in the BMW. It was raced at Silverstone in the Tourist Trophy in period."

They took seventh overall and third in class first time out.

Whales plot racing season in Ford Escort Mk1

Father-and-son pairing Nick and Harry Whale switched to a Jaguar Mk2 saloon for the Jaguar Classic Challenge race at Donington Park but will soon move to a Ford Escort.

Through their Silverstone Auctions business they have strong links to Jaguar Heritage and the Mk2 was on loan for the occasion. Nick also qualified the Nissan Skyline of Ric Wood for the Historic Touring Car Challenge but didn't get into the race as the four-wheel-drive car cut out during Wood's opening stint.

The Whales will now focus on racing the ex-Mike Bell Ford Escort Mk1 in the HTCC. "I've never been a Ford man before, but we've ended up with two now," said Nick, as he also has the ex-Phil Collins Mk2 rally car. He has sold his BMW M3 race and rally cars, with the race car going to a customer in Germany.

Lotus 15 is back

Gareth Burnett and Le Mans racer Richard Bradley raced the newly acquired Lotus 15 of Michael Birch to fourth place in the Stirling Moss Trophy at Donington. "I've only done four laps here," said Burnett before qualifying. The ex-Graham Hill car was most recently owned and raced by Dion Kremer and runs a two-litre Coventry Climax engine.

Revival will have two themes

Revival Rally to mark special anniversaries

The 2021 edition of Rally Revival will mark two major rallying anniversaries when it runs to a demonstration and tour format on Friday and Saturday October 15-16.

From a new base at Glyndwr University Wrexham, the event will celebrate 40 years since Ari Vatanen and David Richards won the 1981 WRC and 20 years since Richard Burns and Robert Reid won the 2001 World Rally Championship.

Friday evening will feature two floodlit evening stages at Rednal Circuit near Oswestry and Saturday's action will centre on the key spectator venue of Weston Park.

IN BRIEF

Dean at Donington
Lotus Europa racer and Road Sports champion Jim Dean made his Pre-War Sports debut at Donington in the 1939 Aston Martin Monoposto of co-driver, Steve Skipworth. They also shared Skipworth's Jaguar E-type during the weekend. It was Dean's first experience of the Pre-War car. "I've been double de-clutching the Ford Ranger pickup all week as practice," he said.

Woodhouse Junior
Category champion Mark Woodhouse is hoping to do a full season in Formula Junior in his Lotus 20 and continued his campaign at the Donington Historic Festival. He's not raced the Lotus regularly for four seasons, as it has been used successfully by his son Jack. Woodhouse senior will switch back to his front-engined Elva 100 for the next Formula Junior races at Cadwell Park in early June.

Hibberd goes alone
Andrew Hibberd did two Formula Junior races at the Donington Historic Festival to kickstart his season. However, plans for his father Michael to also race were scuppered after dad's Lotus 22 developed an engine issue in testing at Brands Hatch on Friday. Andrew raced his own Lotus 22 and also jumped into dad's Lola Mk2. He claimed two podiums but did not get out on Sunday as he was second reserve in the Lotus.

Four Minshaws
Four members of the Minshaw family contested the same race the first time in Saturday's Jaguar Classic Challenge at the Donington Historic Festival. Jon, the eldest of three brothers, went solo in his E-type while his son Jack and brother Guy raced another of Jon's cars. Jason shared the E-type of Martin Melling and it was the first time the four of them had been on the same grid together. Jack and Guy won the family battle in seventh place.

Stretton scuppered
Martin Stretton's plans to share the Lotus 15 of Richard Wilson in the Stirling Moss Trophy race at the Donington Historic Festival were scuppered when an engine issue developed during qualifying. They had originally planned to race Wilson's beautiful Maserati 250 but a vibration in the car forced them to switch to the Lotus. They hope to be back in the Maserati for the next races at the Thruxton Historic in June.

FEATURE

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Motorsport Images

Cowley leads a typically tight FF1600 battle

WHAT FORMULA FORD HAS DONE FOR US

In the age of bespoke junior racing series what the does old warhorse Formula Ford offer up-and-coming racers? Plenty that you won't get elsewhere, as Graham Keilloh explains

As with many things these days, it is common to hear the lament that Formula Ford 1600 isn't what it used to be. And it's undeniable that the age of it being the automatic first step for aspiring top-level racers is long gone.

But there's life in the old dog yet. The British GT field, for one, shows this. GT4 Pro-Am champion and overall race-winner Scott Malvern is a British Formula Ford champion from its Duratec days, last year's GT4 title-contender Matt Cowley is another FF1600 graduate (and still races them when he can), while 2020 frontrunner Michael O'Brien started in historic Fords. You'll find plenty of FF1600 graduates elsewhere in racing too.

So with racing's landscape containing a flood of bespoke junior categories, that can take you in aged 14, what does grand old FF1600 offer the budding competitor? Plenty.

Racecraft and value for money remain Formula Ford's biggest offerings. Plus there's a wide variety of competitions and circuits. Not just in the UK either, Cowley for one has also raced in American and Australian equivalents.

"When I was looking to go out of go-karting, we were looking at F4 and at the time it was a lot of money for not a lot," Cowley tells Motorsport News. "You get a lot of profile, but track time and seat time you don't get much. And one of my dad's friends races the Classic Formula Fords, [we] looked into it, it's brilliant value for money, get a load of laps in and it really teaches you how to drive as well so it was a no brainer, just jumped straight into it and loved it."

Malvern concurs to MN: "Being able [in FF1600] to follow so closely to each other, no aerodynamic wash, no loss of grip or anything, you can race absolutely wheel to wheel. They do slipstream very very well, so the racing is always fantastic.

"Learning to drive around in very close proximity to other cars is something that's very valuable, because you see now when they're in a higher level of racing quite often when two cars are in close proximity they end up crashing into each other, because they've not had that huge amount of experience of being close with multiple cars."

Cowley indeed continues to put his FF1600 racecraft into practice, citing his ambush pass, vital for victory, of Jamie Caroline's TF Aston at Brands Hatch's British GT round last year. "It was on the GP loop where no-one really overtakes," Cowley recalls, "but with Formula Ford you know that you can make late moves and things like that. I knew there was just enough room to get by, so I just went for it."

O'Brien also confirms to MN that he draws on his FF1600 learning: "At multiple times [in 2020] when we were fighting for the GT3 championship: the Formula Ford car placement, the Formula Ford keeping your head under pressure, knowing when to defend, when not to defend, all of those skills really paid off."

Another FF1600 alumnus James Roe Jr, who now races in America's Indy Pro 2000, notes to MN: "Formula Ford just brings you on a huge amount and a lot of young guys nowadays for the value for money, what it costs, what you learn, the tracks you go to, you need to seriously be looking at it. It's probably less than half the price of a competitive go-karting championship in the UK."

Roe outlines indeed another FF1600 benefit, that modern-day spec junior series cannot rival. "The biggest thing that I take away from Formula Ford is how much you learn as a driver from a vehicle dynamics standpoint because it's an open series," Roe explains, "You can have whatever chassis you want, you can choose whatever engine builder you want, you can put whatever dampers you want on the car, whatever springs.

"So from a driver's standpoint, especially a young driver in the modern era, you learn a huge amount. Because all junior formulas nowadays are spec formulas and everyone has the same chassis and then you're given three sets of springs and everyone has the same dampers and that's it."

FF1600's lack of aerodynamics is a bonus here too, as aero can 'mask' mechanical issues. "[Your] complete focus is the dynamics of the vehicle based purely on nothing except the mechanical grip," Malvern says. "So it gives you a great foundation in understanding what the car's doing and what your influence is over the platform prior to experiencing any aerodynamic complications."

It's again something Cowley has taken with him. "With the GT now if I know something's wrong I don't go 'oh we need a bit of wing or a bit more on the front splitter', I immediately go to mechanical and start changing the rebound or the shocks or something like that," he notes.

And while the benefits may not be immediate on the spec-series-dominated single-seater ladder, Roe explains they will come later. "I know deep down the day when you're in a higher championship where there's a lot more options that the knowledge will pay off drastically and that's something I'm looking forward to doing," he says. "[FF1600] just builds up your database from a feel standpoint and you can really hone in on at a later date when you're being relied upon to develop a car."

Malvern reckon Fords might though have one drawback, with top-level racing's move to paddleshift gearboxes. "[FF1600 having a] manual H-pattern gearbox is a big influence, [for] a lot of drivers unless they do some historic racing, it's not something they're going to encounter in their career," he cautions.

O'Brien, who competed at last year's Goodwood Speedweek, winning the Glover Trophy in a Brabham BT14, disagrees. "Even though it's not relevant in the cars that I'm driving now it's a string to the bow that less and less modern drivers have," he says, "and with the historic stuff I do, with that win at Goodwood and bits last year, without the heel and toe and learning those skills in Formula Ford I definitely wouldn't be where I'm at."

And, whatever the detail, alumni do not doubt what Formula Ford gave them. "I certainly wouldn't have had have any of the success that I've had if it wasn't for Formula Ford," Malvern concludes. "It's a shame because, it's still popular, but it's overlooked by a lot of drivers now as an option. I feel they miss out on some valuable stuff there that's going to stand them in good stead for the rest of their career."

Roe adds: "No matter what you're driving, for rear-wheel-drive single-seaters you cannot beat Formula Ford and that's the bottom line. The series is unbelievable, you'll learn so much." ■

Malvern took the British FF1600 crown in 2011

O'Brien (94) found competition in Historics

Cowley uses FF1600 learning in current racing

Nightmare scenario came true for O'Brien at Silverstone

Formula Ford's cruel runnings – O'Brien misses the Historic crown

For all that Formula Ford offers plenty for developing racers, it can with it offer cruelty with the best of them too. This Michael O'Brien discovered at Silverstone in 2017 when he looked set to claim the Historic Formula Ford championship crown in his first full racing season.

"I was leading the championship by 24 points with a maximum of 25 available for [the final race]. It was me and Richard Tarling for the championship," O'Brien tells MN.

"All I had to do was score one point. Before the race we thought 'let's just put a different set of tyres on for race two'. But the second set of wheels, the inside of the rim had a tiny crack around the well.

"The race started well, [then] I started falling down the order. It was puzzling and then the balance of the car started to shift and started to oversteer and eventually I had to retire.

"That wasn't the end of the world because as long as Richard didn't win I would still be OK. And on the final lap of the race Richard got past the leader on the entry into Brooklands and won. To miss out by one point like that was quite cruel."

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FEATURE

TOM KRISTENSEN

I FEEL I HAVE BEEN BLESSED IN MY CAREER

Hal Ridge catches up with Mr Le Mans and puts the MN readers' questions to him

Always with a smile: Tom Kristensen

Picture an Audi at Le Mans, and the driver most likely to feature in that image is Dane Tom Kristensen. The record-holder in terms of outright victories in the French classic has a place in motorsport's most famous race's history books that can never be taken away.

As Kristensen himself points out, his success at Le Mans probably type-cast him as a sportscar man, but it hadn't always been that way. A promising junior single-seater career helped him to claim F3 titles and he progressed to the cusp of Formula 1 and took part in several grand prix test programmes.

But the top table never beckoned, and his adventures in sportscar racing, and most notably with Audi and Le Mans, cemented his place in the record books forever. Winning the twice-around-the-clock race at Le Mans once is hard enough. Doing it nine times is remarkable.

There was not only success in sportscar racing, but he was a winner in tin-tops all over the globe including a stint in the DTM and the British Touring Car Championship.

Kristensen has recently had time to look back as he has co-authored a book detailing his racing career and his achievements. We caught him in reflective mood.

Question: How did the motorsport passion get fired in you? Where did it come from?
John Charles
Via email
Tom Kristensen: "I watched my dad, Carl-Erik, race when I grew up. They were working on his touring cars and later his rallycross cars at the workshop and I was taken to the circuits when I was wearing nappies. My mum was floating around with me in the buggy.

"I was extremely proud of my dad, he was a very aggressive driver and he was very fast, so that powered my adrenalin in that direction. He didn't have good material, they were working on it themselves and he didn't have a lot of budget so he retired many times, but it was this atmosphere of what happened at the workshop, travelling to the tracks and then enjoying these lovely sounds.

"I remember for one race he had a BDA engine, and that sound sort of implanted in me when I was young. During these races I found fascination for karting. A few of the asphalt races we went to there was karting and that's where I realised I found my foundation from when I was eight or nine years old."

Question: Describe the emotions you feel when you're behind the wheel and racing. What attracts you to racing – is it something you couldn't live without?
Lou Davis
Via Instagram
TK: "Now I'm retired, but when I was

Photos: Motorsport Images, Tom Kristensen

Karting was where the Dane's passion began

racing that was the best feeling. That already started from when you have these expectations when you enter the paddock, giving fist pumps with your team who have been there since hours before, then when you get in the car, that's the ultimate.

"All the preparation and you are there to put it on the spot, you are there to nail it and looking for the zone, all your reflexes everything is about trying to extract the most from late braking, brake transition, the whole thing when you're trying to maintaining the apex with the highest possible speed and trying to release the brake as you're coming onto the power trying to make the transition the best possible without more slide than you need to get around the corner. I think that's a unique feeling. There's even the smell, the *g*-forces, the temperature. In racing you always have to look a little further forward than you do sitting still in an office. There is no better feeling."

Question: What are your thoughts on the future of the top-flight of sportscar racing with Le Mans Hypercar and the LMDh regulations?
Joe Bramble
Via Twitter
TK: "I'm very excited. There has always been times around sportscar racing where there has [been] a little bit of a [new] dawn. After we heard that Audi retired and Porsche retired from top-flight, it's great to see that all the manufacturers are all coming back again, and what a united feeling of having the IMSA and the FIA WEC to make sure that with the LMDh both in America and of course at Le Mans.

"This is a very nice carrot for the world-wide manufacturers as well as that they are gearing up to 2023 where Le Mans has its 100 years anniversary. I'm really excited, on behalf of the boardroom of many car manufacturers who have seen this is the right way. I'm happy that the organisations that have been able to get together for the good of the sport and I'm incredibly excited for all the drivers of this generation for the opportunities that they will get."

Question: Which of your Le Mans wins do you remember the best, and why?
John Richards
Via email
TK: "That's a very difficult question. I did 18 starts at Le Mans, I had 16 or 17 team-mates, because Marc Gene came in for the very last race substituting for Loic Duval who had this big impact in a crash just before my last race in 2014.

"The first race, exactly the word 'impact' is the right one. [It had an impact on] me as a person, as a driver, joining Michele Alboreto and Stefan Johansson at the very first race with Team Joest, signed days before the event. Particularly [important was] the way Michele embraced me, gave me a lot of confidence, never asked me to do anything but always just answered my questions and meant I was immediately feeling level-headed with these two superstars.

"So, in that way, the first one was very important, and to have learned the circuit by doing it, not by looking at any data or anything, I've seen a few videos but not really onboards, walking the track and then getting just 17 timed laps before the race started, I wasn't necessarily flying in the opening stints but later and the second time I was in the car it was in the middle of the night, and when the dusk arrived, I was putting lap times in that were good enough for fastest lap at that time. I even put a few lap records in which were still standing after the race. That's something I would recall as the most important [over] the rest.

"But for sure, the 19 hours in the rain in 2001 [was memorable]. We had lost Michele shortly before the race, that's very strong. In 2008, everyone in the team did a superb job, took all the risks they could in terms of strategy, tyre pressures, engine settings, fuel mileage, how we drove and with the rain that arrived a few times in the race, but the way we managed to conquer the Peugeot which was miles ahead of us on lap times, this was a race for the best team spirit I have ever experienced.

"The last victory was in 2013 and that was mentally the toughest one. I had lost my father a few months earlier, around the Sebring race, we didn't win that and I made sure I really wanted to win at Le Mans and Loic and Allan McNish were with me on that. Then we lost Allan Simonsen shortly into the race, everyone got that information and me being a Dane in a way that gave me a lot of responsibility and it was a nice way we could give this victory to him.

"It was a very hard one, a very sad one but nevertheless it became a very important one that we had to nail that one and that put a lot of strain on everyone that was there to experience the race."

Question: If you could choose, would you go for a closed-cockpit or open-cockpit LMP car and why?
David Wilby
Via email
TK: "Open cockpit. I like that you can feel, which there is a lot of in sportscar racing, a lot of buffeting, turbulent air as you're constantly in a fight with other cars and you always have to overtake the slower cars and that gives you a little bit more respect of that the car is sometimes twitchy when you get into this turmoil of air. Plus it's fresher outside.

continued on page 16

Dad Carl-Erik Kristensen was an inspiration for the young hopeful

Tom Kristensen's first Le Mans win was in 1997 after a very late call-up

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FEATURE

"This is a selfish point of view as a driver, but if you speak with engineers you pretty quickly go for a closed cockpit because it's aerodynamically better and it is what you need at Le Mans. In a closed cockpit you have the windscreen quite far away from yourself and it's very round, so when it gets dirty the reflection on it is very challenging, the temperature inside a closed cockpit is extremely high, and if there's a problem and you need to get into the electronics of the car it's not very accessible compared to an open. Those are some of the pros and cons, but from the selfish driver point of view, open cockpit."

Question: You are often described as one of the best drivers never to make it to Formula 1. How do you feel when you hear that?
James Hilton
Via email
TK: "I would say it's quite an accolade. I definitely took notice and it made me happy when I saw it. It was one of the magazines initially that called me that, then I also think Formula 1 did [a list] last year.

"I think in a way I'm very happy for this accolade but on the other hand I can say that it didn't happen. But, if it had happened then my Le Mans and sportscar career suddenly wouldn't have been as good so I'm quite at ease with it in that sense but, of course, I'm flattered and I enjoyed my time trying to break through to Formula 1, but it never materialised.

"The timing was never right and of course I had never had any backing from Denmark in those days, which nowadays it seems possible. People are now more educated in our little country about motorsport than they were when I was trying to break through. Now and it's very good to see the young drivers going forward and coming up that they will have good opportunities."

Question: Several of your former DTM team-mates later switched to rallycross. As you own a kart circuit next to a rallycross track in Denmark, have you ever been tempted to try the discipline?
James Grey
Via Twitter
TK: "Yes. I've done some Race of Champions which is sometimes rally cars, rallycross cars, circuit cars, so I like this versatility. Mattias Ekstrom asked me once to try, but I couldn't go and unfortunately it didn't happen again. I've been interested but it never materialised. But I love rallycross as I was seeing my dad doing it many, many years ago."

Question: If you could pick two drivers to share a car with you at Le Mans, who would you choose?
Damien Doherty
Via email
TK: "The team-mates I had were brilliant, and the mixture of that has been incredibly good for my career. A few victories got away, but I would say any of these drivers would be in.

"If I had to think out of the box I would have like to have added a few. I tried to be a Bentley Boy in 2003 so maybe it would be Woolf Barnato from the original Bentley band of boys in the 1920s. He was an incredible character and driver, and I had actually the chance to sit beside his daughter – she unfortunately passed away in 2008 – in 2003 at the Savoy hotel. Woolf's daughter who was a pilot in the British army, the first woman to fly through the sound barrier so the blood was still running fast in the family.

"I would put him and if we can make a four then we put Derek Bell and Jacky Ickx as well because these were people I listened to, looked up to and were fascinated about with the way they went about their sportscar career as well."

Question: What was the one Audi you would most liked to have competed in but didn't?
Richard Davies
Via email
TK: "I would have been a good fit to drive the IMSA GTO in the US. I drove that car, due to my Audi exploits, a few times and I think that would have been something going around in the States which was done by Walter Rohrl, and Hans-Joachim Stuck and Hurley Haywood driving the IMSA GTO, so I would maybe pick that one in the first instance."

Question: What do you think of Audi's Dakar project? Would you be interested in competing on that event?
Jason French
Via email
TK: "Initially when I first heard about it, it was just a few days before it was announced and I was surprised it was a very different turn, but as we have seen there have been other things that have changed around Audi Sport. It makes sense in many ways, but definitely surprised.

"My dad did Paris-Dakar, driving originally the very first time for the British Toleman team where he drove the truck and he always spoke to me about it as a great event, a great challenge and adventure. It was a mixture of these things, that was something he said maybe we should do that someday. Unfortunately that didn't materialise but yes, I would be happy to support Audi in this way going forward absolutely."

Question: What do you remember of your season in the British Touring Car Championship in 2000, and how did it compare to the other tin-top championships you have contested?
Emma Facey
Via email
TK: "I would say you tightened the wrench a little bit more, the air was a bit thinner. The circuits, as I just did one season, most of them were new to me. I knew some of them but not Donington Park, Knockhill, Oulton Park, Croft, Brands Hatch Indy but I knew the GP circuit, I knew the GP circuit at Silverstone but not the short circuit, so in many ways it was new to me.

"The championship was really cool. I definitely had to take notice, I mean at the very first race I happened to be close to Matt Neal and Jason Plato and you learn you race harder there than in the tin-tops I had done in Japan and in Germany.

TK says Audi took risks to win Le Mans in 2008

An engaging tale of a man who grabbed his opportunities

MR LE MANS: TOM KRISTENSEN
Co-author Dan Philipsen describes Tom Kristensen as a "racing aficionado" within the 430 pages of this hardback, and it's a term that couldn't be more fitting.

So occupied are racing drivers with looking forward that they more often than not put memories of the past to one side, so much so that they are subsequently sometimes difficult to recollect.

Despite being arguably one of the most successful racing drivers of all time, in a career that has included competing in multiple series each year, in addition aside from his most noted successes at Circuit de la Sarthe, Kristensen has a wonderful ability to recall detail of his own exploits. The Dane's passion for his sport and its history shines through in the pages of this memoir.

The engaging tales begin early in the book, with recollections of the telephone call from Joest Racing team manager Ralf Juttner during a tennis match in Denmark nine days before the 1997 Le Mans 24 hours that gave Kristensen his sportscar breakthrough. But that was not before a meeting in the German squad's factory, despite the team having already left for the event, and then, on arrival to the venue for his maiden appearance, getting Juttner and his Renault Clio rental car beached on the edge of the circuit while doing a reconnaissance lap.

'Mr Le Mans: Tom Kristensen' by Tom Kristensen with Dan Philipsen is a wholesome, engaging reflection of an incredible career. Available in hardback, priced £40 from Evro Publishing: evropublishing.com.

It seems like you were able to get a little bit more away with that and, maybe on that side, I was a bit of a slow learner. But for sure I recall the best was the challenge of the very versatile and different circuits.

"I would say I was able to go quite well, and winning in Oulton Park was an amazing breakthrough but unfortunately that happened around halfway through the season. I was on pole at Brands Hatch but I got to turn three and Plato said 'alright I turn left here at Surtees' and he shovelled me right. The last two races were the night races at Silverstone and I won the last two races of this era, and that was an amazing era of Super Touring.

"Ford was there putting and enormous budget in and all of the weapons in with three fantastic drivers in Alain Menu, Rickard Rydell and Anthony Reid, Vauxhall was Yvan Muller and Plato, Gabriele Tarquini, myself and James Thompson with Honda, Neal with Nissan, it was a very tough championship I have to say.

"I'm proud at finishing on a high and winning the last two was really nice but that was unfortunately the finish of Super Touring. If that had gone on until 2001 definitely we would have been there and I would have started the year better than in my debut and only season in BTCC. Great memories, also to have English breakfast on the Sundays before the race meeting, that's a bit unusual but I even learned to chew the sausage in the end, so pretty good."

Question: Which is your favourite United Kingdom circuit and why?
Derek Russell
Via Twitter
TK: "Oulton Park. Initially when I drove it I thought 'I'm going to get kicked here', but in the end of working with my engineer, working on the lines, looking a bit at how [team-mate] James [Thompson] took some of the corners, I think we put it on pole and we won the race. That was something I truly enjoyed.

"Brands Hatch Indy circuit is fantastic, for touring cars these are very good. But I also like at Knockhill, the mental strain of constantly having to put the car exactly right and my dice with Rydell at Knockhill was something fantastic because he is a driver I go back a long time with in Japan. We go hard but fair and that was really something. If you go the other side, one I didn't click with was Thruxton, I was not able to be on the podium there, that just didn't click for me."

Question: You can take one car home from the Goodwood Revival to keep. Which one and why?
David Harbey
Via Twitter
TK: "Any of the ones I drove. They are all in their own right fantastic machines, optimised and polished and let's say more or less original. It has been a great experience to be able to participate at Goodwood and that's something certainly I thank the Duke of Richmond and his family. The way of competition there and the camaraderie because when we are there it's about the cars and the heritage of the sport and that's something I truly enjoy. It could be an American car, an Italian car, a British car. Any of those will do."

Question: Who are the best other drivers encountered at Goodwood?
Paul Lockfoot
Via email
TK: "There is a lot of very good drivers but the ones you respect more are when you can go drive competitively but with a little smile on your face at the same time, and there's a lot of those there.

"Anyone invited to Goodwood as a professional driver has definitely achieved a big goal and every year the competition of competing there becomes more.

"To be invited I think is something that is already a great remark. One thing I would say, the second time I was there, you get to realise that you should not underestimate anything. I believe I was in the Lotus Cortina and I knew the car was pretty quick. I went out to do the qualifying and I'm on it, then I start to go well. I think I'm going well and then I see this car coming closer and it's another Cortina. I look in the mirror and I see it's a closed-face helmet, but I see the eyes and it's obviously full of determination and wrinkles. I kept going and pushed myself to get even better.

"When we came into the collecting area I got out and I looked and I saw Richard Attwood take his helmet off and I had to say 'Jesus Christ, you were on it, young man'. That's what it's about and that's something which younger driver will experience when they come to Goodwood when they think somebody who should have been falling off the edge maybe a

"I am quite at ease with my career when I reflect"
Tom Kristensen

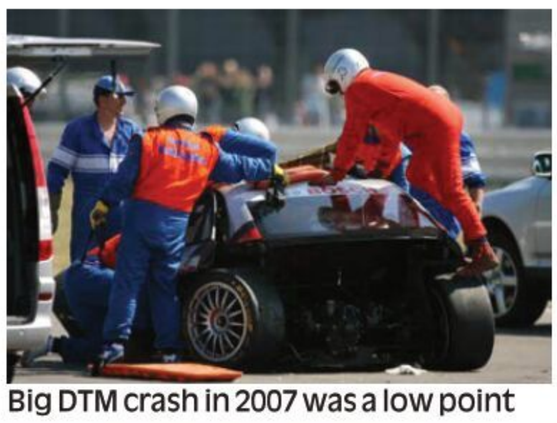
Sharing Le Mans podium in 2001 with Emanuele Pirro and Frank Biela

On the limit and having fun: The Dane at Goodwood

Kristensen undertook several F1 test programmes, including Tyrrell (above) and for Michelin too

"I learned to race hard in the BTCC"

Tom Kristensen


Big DTM crash in 2007 was a low point

long time ago in terms of performance, these guys don't forget how it was when they got going and they got started.

Question: From your point of view, what is the best corner at Le Mans?
Stella Wilde
Via Instagram
TK: "If you asked me 10 years ago I would probably say a different corner. The track has improved safety in some aspect, but that has created some sporting issues. But, in short, I would say one corner that's the Esses, actually the combination of the Esses, that always needs the muscle memory to freeze when you go through there to make sure you don't run out at either side and make sure in the compression you need to stick the car and when you can do that you can go incredibly fast though the Esses."

Question: You've recently recalled your career in depth for your book, how much did you enjoy detailing your career?
Mike Aston
Via email
TK: "The pictures were what I enjoyed most with the book, and the difficulties came most when all the pictures I had to take away, and then the fight a little bit with the author in saying he would like pictures to go with the story, whereas I like pictures which are either amazing or good or whatever. That was in a way nice detailing but also potential conflict a few times."

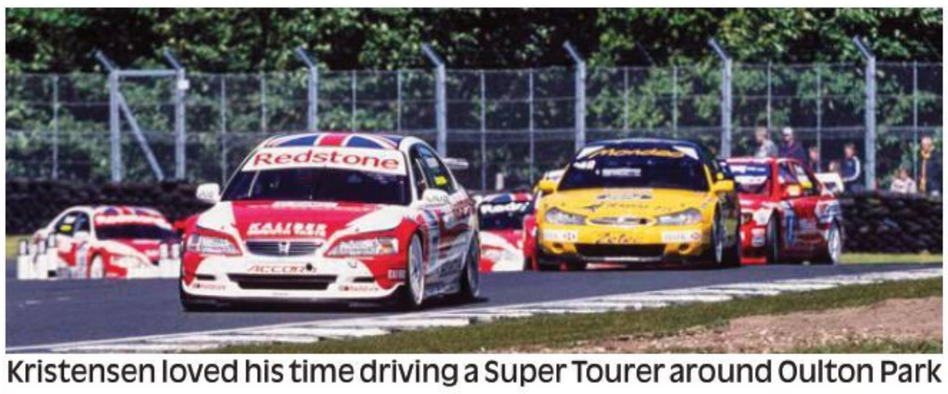
Question: Have you ever been tempted to become a team manager at Le Mans? If not, why not?
Harry O'Dell
Via Twitter
TK: "The right opportunity has not been there. There has been interest, some dialogue, but I have been very happy after my [racing] career to have been with Audi in the roles I have been doing there, certainly when we were the big team and hopefully we will be a larger team again.

"Right now it's pretty slim when you just look at Formula E. I also do a lot of things with the FIA as President of the Drivers' Commission and it's a great company of drivers who we are giving our advice into the FIA which I think over the years has been able to establish a better role in our sport, which we all know is a challenge in changeable times, due to sustainability, due to where the World car manufacturers politically are going. I still work also with some of the companies which I have been blessed with as being part of my career path, such as Rolex, Michelin, Shell at times. In general, there has not been time just to add onto some of the other things which could mean giving something up. Maybe the commenting of F1 and Le Mans, definitely would have to be given up for other roles."

Question: How badly did your DTM crash at Hockenheim in 2007 affect you?
Vincent Banks
Via email
TK: "That's too well described in my new book, it was maybe a little painful just describing that. It hurt and it hurt a long time after in the aftermath of that crash. Maybe I regret staying flat [on the throttle, and going] around in a curve and maybe I should have nerfed Timo [Scheider] into the crash instead, but on instinct I tried to get out of it as I was squeezed by my team-mate.

"I regret that, but I don't regret coming back because that was a focal point in me that my career should not finish with a crash, even though many people were giving me the shortcut out. It didn't happen and I'm very happy for that. In hindsight I came back a little too early, but would I have done it again, yes. Le Mans was too good to leave out that year. That was when I made my comeback, but I was a bit more dizzy and had a lot more headaches for the rest of the year. What was important though was at the next race at Hockenheim at the finale I was on pole, at that point it was good, I would not have been pole if I hadn't come back doing other races. Then winning the season starter in 2008 at Hockenheim sort of put a little bit the nail in the coffin from the outside. That was nice." ■

A collection to be proud of: Tom Kristensen surveys the rewards of his record-breaking Le Mans career



Kristensen loved his time driving a Super Tourer around Oulton Park

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BTCC REPORT: THRUXTON

IN BRIEF

Lap for Harris
A special lap of honour took place at Thruxton for safety car observer Pete Harris, who passed away at the end of April. Safety car driver and friend Scott Stringfellow, who had worked with Harris in the BTCC since 2005, conducted the lap, with Harris's crash helmet in the passenger seat of the Porsche. Former marshal Harris, who had also had a brief race career himself in an MG, was a popular member of the BTCC paddock and was also well known for his work on the A1GP series.

Bartrum is back
With Shaun Hollamby stepping away from his role with Motorbase Performance, former team owner David Bartrum is back in the British Touring Car Championship as joint team principal of the Kent-based crew. Bartrum handed over the reins to Pete Osborne at the start of 2021, but will be on hand at all meetings this season.

Little and large
The first of the two seasonal driver weigh-ins, which is used to set the minimum weight of the car plus its occupant, took place at Thruxton. The driver who topped the scales as the heaviest was MB Motorsport Ford Focus man Ollie Jackson at 113.0kg, while the lightest was his team-mate Jake Hill at 67.5kg.

Sutton's early edge
Laser Tools Racing man Ash Sutton claimed an early lead in the points standings with a solitary mark for claiming his seventh BTCC career pole position amid the treacherous conditions on Saturday afternoon. In the wet-but-drying 30-minute session, bolting on slicks at the right time was key. Sutton's Infiniti was 0.053s ahead of the BTC Racing Honda Civic of Josh Cook, with Colin Turkington's BMW 330i M Sport in third spot.

Rick gets rolling
The only rookie on the BTCC grid this season, Rick Parfitt, impressed on his debut in the category in his Excelr8 Motorsport Trade Price Cars Hyundai i30 N. The British GT champion took a weekend's best result of 16th spot in the final race of the weekend in his first career race at the Hampshire circuit.

Sam is the man
Motorbase Performance Ford Focus driver Sam Osborne is the leader of the Jack Sears Trophy for drivers who have yet to land an overall podium before the start of the 2021 season. Team Dynamics Honda racer Dan Rowbottom won the class in the opening two races in Hampshire but could only manage fourth in the finale, which Osborne won. Speedworks Toyota driver Sam Smelt sits in third spot.

Osborne took JST initiative

BTC Racing Hondas were 1-2 in race two

Cook was on top in two races

COOK SIZZLES AS HILL LANDS THE BIG POINTS

Honda won twice, but MB Motorsport man kept his nerve in the finale. By Matt James

Title credentials for the BTCC have been laid out, and they have come from some unlikely quarters.

Two wins for BTC Racing Honda Civic man Josh Cook in Hampshire had him in the boxed seats before he was scuppered in a rain-hit third race. The finale was claimed by a superb Ash Sutton in his Infiniti Q50.

They might have taken the biggest trophies, but Jake Hill walked away with the points lead in his MB Motorsport Ford Focus. The Kent driver's podium in race three in a slick-shod car on a damp track was a real work of art.

Race one

Cook has an enviable reputation in a Honda around the Hampshire circuit. He had been a winner on each of his three previous visits in the FK8-spec Civic but lining up on the front row with the fast-starting rear-wheel-drive machines of Sutton ahead and Colin Turkington's WSR BMW 330i M Sport behind was always going to be a concern.

By the time they were halfway around the opening lap of the season, the BTC Racing Honda driver was on his way to a ninth career BTCC win.

Sutton had put the power down nicely to reach Allard ahead with Turkington behind him, but the fireworks kicked off as the pack slowed for Campbell. As the cars checked up, Turkington gave the slightest of nudges to the leading Infiniti and the reigning champion spun. Turkington already had Cook to his outside, and the small contact delayed him enough for the Honda to emerge ahead.

Cook's opening-lap drama wasn't finished as he held on to a massive slide at Goodwood. "That? That was nothing," said the cool-as-you-like driver. "It might have looked dramatic from the outside, but it was all under control. The car has to be loose to start with to make sure the rubber lasts the race. It didn't faze me!"

Cook's slithering held the attention of Turkington though. He was again forced to delay the throttle slightly while his rival collected the moment. That was the only invitation Tom Ingram, right in the wheeltracks of the top two, needed to thrust his Excelr8 Hyundai i30 into second spot.

Turkington ran wide at Church further around the lap, which caused the closely following sister BMW of Tom Oliphant to spin to the infield and allowed Hill to steal a march on the run up Woodham Hill to grab third place.

Further back down the road returnee Gordon Shedden (Team Dynamics Honda Civic) was making his way through the midfield (after having a lap removed in qualifying for a track limits infringement), but disaster struck for the Scot on the exit of Noble.

As Ollie Jackson's MB Motorsport Ford Focus collected the kerb and tapped the brakes, Shedden was left with nowhere to go. They made contact, and the Honda slid back across the pack and into the path of Chris Smiley's Excelr8 Hyundai. The pair had a sizeable collision.

"I don't want to blame anyone, but we were in a freight train and there were people braking all around," said three-time title winner Shedden. "I tried to go to the right to avoid making contact with the back of Jackson's car, but that put me on the grass and I was a passenger from there."

That brought out the safety car and gave everyone some breathing space after a highly dramatic first half-lap of 2021.

When racing restarted on lap seven, Cook knew it was his chance. "I simply had to make a break when the green flag flew," he said. "I put my foot down and banged in some fastest laps. That's what secured the win for me, but Ingram made me work hard for it."

> ***"You have to have the car loose early on..."***
>
> **Josh Cook**

Ingram was 2.2s back at the end of the race but was nursing the Goodyear rubber that he felt had dropped off badly towards the end. Hill secured the final podium slot after a tense 19 laps where he was forced to fend off Turkington throughout. Turkington would have been happy to collect fourth-placed points but the officials wanted to look at the incident with Sutton on lap one. They did, and determined that the Northern Irishman was to blame. To the letter of the rules, they penalised him with 17s added to his race time, which placed him behind Sutton in the final order. Sutton therefore claimed ninth, while Turkington was 10th.

One-off returnee Dan Cammish pulled off probably the move of the race to leap from an on-the-road seventh to fifth in one corner. Rory Butcher held fifth in the Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla but had to look to his mirrors to defend from the feisty-looking Jason Plato in his Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra.

Plato made a late lunge for the position at Campbell on lap 13, but ran slightly wide. The pair went side-by-side though Cobb. When Butcher reasserted himself ahead of Plato at Segrave, the duo had only served to slow themselves up so much that Cammish, who had taken a wider entry into the right-hander, was able to out-drag them on the run to Noble.

The BTC Racing man was thrilled with what would become fourth after the post-race penalties. "I thought's Plato's move on Butcher was a really good one," said Cammish. "I didn't think Butcher would try to hang around the outside at the second part of the Complex but he did and I could see what was coming. I just had to bide my time, take a wider entry into the corner and then get on the throttle to overtake them both. I was pleased with that."

Dan Rowbottom took an impressive seventh on his debut with Team Dynamics in the Honda Civic Type R to head home Adam Morgan's Ciceley Motorsport BMW 330i M Sport.

Race two

Cook's blast to the opening corner in race two was helped by Hill and Ingram disputing territory into the right-hander, while Butcher and Cammish mirrored the battle behind. However, by the time the cars reached the Complex, the red flags were flying.

That was because Andy Neate (Motorbase Performance Ford Focus) collected the back of Glynn Geddie (Team Hard Cupra R) going into Allard. Jade Edwards (BTC Racing Honda Civic) travelled towards the outside barrier too and all three hit the wall hard. Geddie's car was launched in the impact. Neate was later fined for his part in the crash.

At the second time of asking, Ingram spotted his chance to charge for glory and the Complex on lap one would be crucial. He tried to power around the outside of Cook and it looked like he'd done it when the Honda's rear end slewed wide.

Cook was saved from rotating by cannoning into the Hyundai alongside and they both slithered off the track. They regained the Tarmac with Cook ahead and Ingram delayed. Cammish pounced on the poor get away from Hill to grab third, which became second when he profited from Ingram's woe.

As the tight pack behind, comprising the recovering Ingram, Butcher, Hill and a closely following Plato, reached Noble on the opening tour, there was further grief as Butcher's Toyota got away from him on cold rear tyres and slid hard into the outside wall on the approach to Goodwood. Cue the safety car for five laps.

The restart was much calmer. Cook held Cammish at arm's length for the 10 laps of full-speed racing, although the two BTC Racing machines were very close.

Cook, who grabbed his second fastest lap of the weekend to boot, collected his second big trophy. "It was hairy at the start and Tom and I both went wide at the Complex, but I gave him room to get back on. I am grateful to my team-mate Dan, who was behind me after that, because he could have made my life a lot more difficult," said the winner, who did admit that the 75kg of increased success ballast this season had taken its toll on his tyres.

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Cammish had been on the radio to the team over the closing stages as he knew he had more pace than the leader, but followed the squad's instructions to help Cook's title quest. "I am just pleased to show what I can do," said Cammish. "And I have shown I can do the job for the team when I need to. But fair play to Josh – he is awfully fast, particularly around Church…"

Hill took another podium on his first weekend with the Ford Focus and reported that it was even better in the second event. His prognosis was that work on the set-up had been beneficial over the course of the afternoon.

Again, Rowbottom was one of the stars of the race as he rose from seventh to fourth spot, a charge that included excellent passes on Ingram and Plato. Plato followed the Honda over the line, while Ingram fended off Turkington to the flag to bag sixth.

Ninth place for Sutton might not seem like much to celebrate, but it was a mammoth damage limitation exercise after a turbo boost problem sent him into the pits under the safety car. The team returned him to the action and he again sliced up the order, including a late pass on a lacklustre Shedden (who finished 18th), to bag the position.

Race three

The final encounter reminded people just why they had missed the BTCC since the end of 2020. Sutton scored his maiden win of the year, Plato used all of his skill and guile to land second place, and it could have been so much more, while third-placed Hill was cruelly robbed of what would have been a fantastic triumph.

The showers that came just as the cars took to the grid threw everyone's plans up in the air. There was a split in the tyre choices but Sutton, going from row two on the reversed-grid line up, made short work of muscling his way to the front when he barged ahead of poleman Stephen Jelley (WSR BMW 330i M Sport) on lap two.

The wet weather-tyred cars were the things to have. Some slithered around on slicks – notably Ingram and Cook, although that pair would later be handed 30-second stop-and-go penalties for switching tyres too late on the grid. Tom Oliphant had dry rubber too on his WSR BMW and, while he ran at the front, he was carrying a five-second penalty for an out-of-position getaway.

In 19th spot after the opening lap despite having started in ninth, Hill was left wondering whether his choice of dry rubber was folly. That was particularly true when he was 18s adrift of Sutton after three laps, but the tide started to turn.

The Ford Focus man put on a virtuoso display, clambering through those struggling with wilting wet Goodyears to go from 12th on lap seven to third on lap eight. One tour later, he jumped ahead of Sutton. It seemed like the game was up for the rest – until the pesky rain returned.

Those who had looked after their wets – Sutton included – started to turn the wick up again. Despite a valiant defence, Hill fell prey to the Infiniti with just three laps to go. Plato had backed off mid-race to preserve his treaded rubber and beat Hill in a dash to the line. Still, Hill's third on slick tyres was the drive of the weekend.

Shedden's weekend was saved by a glorious motor from 18th to fourth, and he was within a hair's breadth of the battling Plato and Hill ahead.

Sutton was thrilled: "I thought I had won it at the start, then I thought I had lost it to Jake, and then I thought I had won it again. What a roller coaster race."

Plato was left fuming, feeling he had been held up by the lapped Cook on the last lap. Hill was beaten by the old master by 0.070s, but still walked away with his third podium and the championship lead by a single point. "I think that was my best BTCC drive yet," he smiled. It was.

Glynn Geddie, Jade Edwards and Andy Neate walked away from race two smash

Sutton: back to the front in race three

Plato was in fighting mood all weekend

SUPPORT RACES

James Hedley was the form man in the opening British F4 Championship races as the under-financed Brit took two wins, including Fortec's first F4 Thruxton success. Starting race one from ninth on the grid, Hedley carved his way through the field to hit the front on lap three and fended off the challenge of team-mate Joel Granfors. Hedley started eighth for race two, the championship's first fully reversed grid race, but was on the attack instantly, fourth at the end of the opening tour and grabbing the lead from Thomas Ikin (Arden Motorsport) on lap five. Hedley became embroiled in a race-stopping four-car cash in race three which was restarted after the third BTCC race allowing teams repair time. Again from eighth, he took third place as Joseph Loake headed home McKenzy Cresswell in a JHR Developments one-two.

Theo Edgerton (TCR) dominated both Porsche Sprint Challenge races, the first on a damp track on Saturday in which he battled from third to first on the opening lap to win from a charging Ethan Hawkey (Team Parker Racing) and IN2Racing's Charles Clark. Edgerton was equally dominant in the televised second race as he pulled clear of Hawkey who fell into tyre woes and was reeled in by Thruxton newcomer Jack Bartholemew (Redline Racing) who snatched second late on.

The latest intake of Ginetta Junior drivers didn't disappoint with Tom Edgar (R Racing) coming out on top of a frantic opener to win from Seb Hopkins (Elite Motorsport) and Josh Miller (R Racing) up from eighth on the grid. Callum Voisin (R Racing) followed in brother Bailey's footsteps by winning race two after a last-lap dive at the Complex ahead of team-mate Aston Millar and poleman Seb Hopkins (Elite Motorsport).

Mini Challenge honours fell to Matt Hammond (Excelr8) and Harry Nunn (A Reeve Motorsport) on Saturday before Alex Solley (A Reeve Motorsport) triumphed in an all-action race on Sunday in which four different drivers took a turn in the lead. Solley assumed the lead two laps from home and fended off the challenge from Hammond and Dominic Wheatley (PerformanceTek Racing) to bag the win, while Elite Motorsport's John Bennett and Xentek's Josh Steed shared Ginetta GT5 honours.

David Addison

RACE WINNERS

F4 British Championship
Race 1&2: James Hedley (Fortec Motorsport); **Race 3:** Joseph Loake (JHR Developments)

Porsche Sprint Challenge
Race 1&2: Theo Edgerton (TCR)

Ginetta Junior Championship
Race 1: Tom Edgar (R Racing); **Race 2:** Callum Voisin (R Racing)

Mini Challenge
Race 1: Matt Hammond (Excelr8 Motorsport); **Race 2:** Harry Nunn (A Reeve Motorsport); **Race 3:** Alex Solley (A Reeve Motorsport)

Ginetta GT5 Challenge
Race 1: John Bennett (Elite Motorsport); **Race 2:** Josh Steed (Xentek Motorsport)

Joseph Loake prevailed in the delayed third Formula 4 race

BTCC RESULTS

Round 1
Laps: 19 Track: dry

	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Josh Cook	BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R	29m33.844s
2	Tom Ingram	Excelr8 with Trade Price Cars Hyundai i30 N	+2.298s
3	Jake Hill	MB Motorsport Ford Focus	+4.227s
4	Dan Cammish	BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R	+9.323s
5	Rory Butcher	Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla	+11.758s
6	Jason Plato	Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra	+12.046s
7	Daniel Rowbottom	Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R	+12.607s
8	Adam Morgan	Ciceley Motorsport BMW 330i M Sport	+19.612s
9	Ashley Sutton	Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50	+21.259s
10	Colin Turkington	WSR BMW 330i M Sport	+21.825s*

11 Aiden Moffat (Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50) +22.760s; 12 Carl Boardley (Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50) +26.391s; 13 Jack Goff (Team Hard Cupra R) +26.720s; 14 Tom Chilton (Ciceley Motorsport BMW 330i M Sport) +27.138s; 15 Tom Oliphant (WSR BMW 330i M Sport) +27.448s; 16 Daniel Lloyd (Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra) +27.791s; 17 Sam Osborne (Motorbase Performance Ford Focus) +29.846s; 18 Aron Taylor-Smith (Team Hard Cupra R) +31.038s; 19 Ollie Jackson (MB Motorsport Ford Focus) +33.636s; 20 Jade Edwards (BTC Racing Honda Civic Type R) +38.774s; 21 Jack Butel (Excelr8 with Trace Price Cars Hyundai i30 N) +41.105s; 22 Glynn Geddie (Team Hard Cupra R) +41.932s; 23 Sam Smelt (Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla) +42.886s; 24 Andy Neate (Motorbase Performance Ford Focus) +45.545s; 25 Rick Parfitt (Excelr8 with Trace Price Cars Hyundai i30 N) +45.928s; 26 Nicolas Hamilton (Team Hard Cupra R) -2 laps; R Stephen Jelley (WSR BMW 330i M Sport) 10 laps/transmission; R Gordon Shedden (Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R) 0 laps/accident; R Chris Smiley (Excelr8 with Trade Price Cars Hyundai i30 N) accident.
Pole position: Sutton 1m18.305s (108.31mph). **Winner's average speed:** 90.84mph. Fastest lap: Cook 1m16.500s (110.87mph). **Lap leaders:** Cook 1-19. * = 17s penalty for contact.

Round 2: 15 laps Track: dry

	DRIVER	TIME
1	Cook (75)	23m06.411s
2	Cammish (39)	+0.234s
3	Hill (57)	+1.625s
4	Rowbottom (21)	+4.655s
5	Plato (27)	+4.976s
6	Ingram (66)	+6.691s
7	Turkington (48)	+7.303s
8	Moffat	+9.291s
9	Sutton (9k)	+10.055s
10	Oliphant	+11.411s

11 Jelley +13.259s; 12 Goff +13.759s; 13 Jackson +15.311s; 14 Lloyd +15.826s; 15 Taylor-Smith +16.944s; 16 Osborne +17.540s; 17 Boardley +19.551s; 18 Shedden +19.914s; 19 Butel +26.245s; 20 Smelt +26.623s; 21 Morgan (15kg) +32.085s; 22 Hamilton +35.931s; R Smiley 14 laps/overheating sensor issue; R Parfitt 8 laps/throttle position isensor issue; R Butcher (33) 0 laps/crash; R Chilton 0 laps/fuel pump failure; R Edwards 0 laps/accident; R Geddie 0 laps/accident; R Neate 0 laps/accident. **Winner's average speed:** 91.76mph. **Fastest lap:** Cook 1m16.453s (110.93mph). **Lap leaders:** Cook 1-15. **Brackets** = ballast.

Round 3: 16 laps Track: damp

	DRIVER	TIME
1	Sutton (15)	22,47.671s
2	Plato (39)	+4.789s
3	Hill (57)	+4.859s
4	Shedden	+5.025s
5	Lloyd	+9.927s
6	Turkington (27)	+10.105s
7	Oliphant (9)	+13.212*
8	Goff	+14.014s
9	Jackson	+16.377s
10	Jelley	+18.71s

11 Taylor-Smith +21.321s; 12 Osborne +24.962s; 13 Chilton +25.188s; 14 Smelt +25.772s; 15 Smiley +38.846s; 16 Parfitt +40.064s 17 Hamilton +52.655s; 18 Morgan +55.339s; 19 Butel +1m04.841s; 20 Cook (75) -1 lap; 21 Rowbottom (48) -1 lap; 22 Ingram (33) -1 lap; 23 Cammish (66) -1 lap; R Boardley 14 laps/accident; R Butcher 14 laps/accident; R Moffat (21) 9 laps/electrics; R Edwards 3 laps/electrics. **Winner's average speed:** 99.22mph. **Fastest lap:** Cook 1m18.594s (107.91mph). **Lap leaders:** Jelley 1; Sutton 2-8; Hill 9-13; Sutton 14-16. **Brackets** = ballast. * = five seconds added for out-of-position start

Drivers standings

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Jake Hill	46
2	Josh Cook	45
3	Jason Plato	38
4	Ash Sutton	36
5	Dan Cammish	30
6	Tom Ingram	27
7	Colin Turkington	25
8	Dan Rowbottom	22
9	Tom Oliphant	16
10	Jack Goff	15

11 Gordon Shedden 13; 12 Aiden Moffat 13; 13 Dan Lloyd 13; 14 Stephen Jelley 12; 15 Rory Butcher 11; 15 Ollie Jackson 10; 16 Adam Morgan 8; 17 Aron Taylor-Smith 6; 18 Tom Chilton 5; 19 Sam Osborne 4; 20 Carl Boardley 4; 21 Sam Smelt 2; 22 Chris Smiley 1.

Independents Trophy

POS	DRIVER	POINTS
1	Cook	45
2	Plato	43
3	Sutton	39
4	Cammish	34
5	Ingram	31
6	Rowbottom	30
7	Lloyd	26
8	Goff	26
9	Taylor-Smith	21
10	Shedden	19

11 Moffat 19; 12 Boardley 13; 13 Jack Butel 12; 14 Chris Smiley 9; 15 Rick Parfitt 9; 16 Nic Hamilton 9; 17 Jade Edwards 4; 18 Glynn Geddie 2.

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FEATURE

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY: THE LATEST LLEWELLIN TO EARN STAGE SPURS

Tom Llewellin (left) is ready to aim for wins

Tom Llewellin, son of double British champion David, is stepping up to a Spencer Sport-built Mitsubishi Mirage R5 in 2021. Luke Barry takes a closer look

Plenty of testing has Llewellin ready for the BTRDA and Welsh seasons

Thirty-five years ago, on his 26th birthday, David Llewellin blew the candles out on his cake and set off from Cardiff to start the Welsh International Rally in his MG Metro 6R4.

He and co-driver Phil Short were in red-hot form having won the Circuit of Ireland Rally a month earlier and were keen to avenge a local curse that had prevented Llewellin from winning his home event.

Things started swimmingly as he led the early stages, only for a trip into a ditch and then a barrel roll at a hairpin to prolong the wait for another year.

"I remember it well," Llewellin tells MN today. The day we are talking is May 4, 2021 – the day after Llewellin's 61st birthday – and the focus is on the next generation of the family. We're still in Wales, but not on a rally. Instead, it's a test for David's son Tom as he acclimatises to the Mitsubishi Mirage R5 he will drive in 2021.

"He won't let me [drive]!" David, who stopped competing full-time after 1995, jokes. "He doesn't trust me." MN asks: "Maybe he's scared that you'll beat him?"

"Yeah, that's right," adds David. "I'm telling everyone I'm getting old and slow, and I just don't want to be proved right…"

Despite the good spirits, there is something serious afoot. While presence at Walters Arena in south Wales is dressed up as a launch day for Llewellin Jr and his backers, it's also a fantastic opportunity to get out and learn the new car. Tom will compete in the BTRDA Rally Series and Welsh Rally Championship this season, and he's a rally driver. He doesn't like being uncompetitive. Around 45 miles of testing were completed at Sweet Lamb a few weeks ago and another 60 will be clocked on this day. Things are starting to come together.

"We made some really good changes to the car, mainly suspension-wise," Tom affirms. "We just improved the balance of the car and obviously that improved my confidence a hell of a lot as well, and yeah I just felt like I could do whatever I wanted to do with the car."

More comfortable than at Sweet Lamb? "Yes definitely, a lot more comfortable." Not words Llewellin's rivals will want to be hearing, as the one trump card they may have held over the 20-year-old looks to have dissipated already.

His route to reach this R5 chance has been a touch unorthodox, meaning he's learning a lot of new things that he'd have otherwise already been on top of had he driven a more traditional R2 as opposed to a Ford Escort Mk2 in recent years.

Tom fills us in: "I've always been involved in motorsport because of dad and going to a few shows and then my brother and dad started hillclimbing, they got an Escort and I was always with them, I wouldn't ever miss an event. And then basically when I was 11, 12 years old I thought 'when I'm 14 I'm going junior rallying'. That's what I wanted to do. So then I started rallying in a Nissan Micra and I just got hooked then, that was it.

"And obviously we had the opportunity then to have a go at some rallycross, got into the juniors, started doing really well and won the British championship in 2017," he adds. "In 2018 I went to the seniors and I was second in the championship then, had a really good season in the car but when I moved to the Escort, I got in it and was like 'this is what I want to do'. Obviously costs got a bit more expensive so I kind of had to commit to one or the other in a way but for me it wasn't about the cost it was just 'I want to go rallying now'."

Go rallying he did, and he quickly became a winner, claiming the 2019 Welsh Junior title with the Escort. Although David thinks Tom has, perhaps, got to adapt a little bit more than others because, Dad says, "if you're in an R2 car you tend to be left-foot braking and have a sequential gearbox so it's a lesser step". Tom is confident the Escort has still taught him well.

"To be honest to drive an Escort you've got to drive it hard," says Tom. "It's very physical, no power steering, the car is forgiving but physical to drive. The Escort was a fast car in a straight line but the cornering speeds weren't too high so I think it was a really good stepping stone for me to learn pacenotes and learn everything else that goes with rallying

Photos: JMS Photography, SMJ Photography

Llewellin had expert advice on hand at his test session

Welshman has support from Spencer Sport

LLEWELLIN'S 2021 SEASON

The dates for Tom's diary

DATE	EVENT	SERIES
July 10	Nicky Grist Stages	BTRDA, Welsh
July 24	Scottish Rally	BTRDA
Aug 14	Plains Rally	BTRDA, Welsh
Sept 9	Woodpecker Rally	BTRDA, Welsh
Sept 25	Trackrod Rally Yorkshire	BTRDA
Oct 16	Wyedean	Welsh
Oct 30	Cambrian Rally	BTRDA, Welsh
Nov13	Rallynuts Stages Rally	BTRDA, Welsh

Llewellin is having to adapt his driving style to suit the Mirage R5

THE UK'S OTHER FLEDGLING RALLYING DYNASTIES

From the McRae clan to the Higgins brothers and of course Gwyndaf and Elfyn Evans, British rallying is accustomed to families and generations of those families competing – and winning – at home and beyond. The Llewellin story is just the latest example, but Tom is by no means the only youngster following in Dad's footsteps this year. Here are MN's two picks of young guns with a famous name who are worth watching in 2021:

Elliot Payne

Born: January 4, 2003
Father: Charlie Payne (2016 BTRDA Gold Star champion)
2021 programme: Junior BRC and selected R5 outings

It's impossible not to be hugely impressed with what we've seen from Elliot Payne so far. In six senior rallying starts following three Junior 1000 seasons, Payne has already won a round of the fiercely competitive BTRDA R2 Rallye Cup, bagged an overall podium and scored a sublime fourth place at Snetterton last month on his four-wheel-drive debut. Elliot's father was competing and finished 30 seconds behind his son! This season will be a blend between Junior BRC in a Rally4 and sporadic drives in a Fiesta R5 and the 18-year-old cannot be discounted from success in both.

Eamonn Kelly

DOB: January 2, 1999
Father: Donagh Kelly (2015 Irish Tarmac & National champion)
2021 programme: Junior BRC

At just 22 years old Kelly is a fresh face to rallying but is incredibly almost exactly four years older than Payne! The pair's careers haven't really intertwined thus far but they will in the Junior BRC this season where both will pilot Fiesta Rally4s. Unlike Payne who went junior rallying, Irishman Kelly stepped straight into stage rallying with a Honda Civic and secured several class wins before stepping up to a Fiesta R2T in 2019. Last season was shaping up incredibly promisingly before Covid-19 curtailed the calendar as Kelly scored three class wins from as many starts.

Payne has already proved the pace to outsmart his old man...

> **"If he goes at that pace, he will be a winner"**
>
> **Ross Whittock**

before I got into a four-wheel-drive car and before the cornering speeds got a lot faster. As soon as I got into the Escort from juniors I wasn't going to go to an R2 from that, as that would've felt like going backwards."

Ross Whittock – who's co-driving Chris Ingram in the World Rally Championship this year – sat with Llewellin back in 2019 and will call the notes on his first R5 start too; the Nicky Grist Stages in July. He is expected to share that role with James Morgan, and both were at Walters Arena to guide Llewellin. Whittock was impressed with what he saw.

"It took the day to change his driving style a little bit, adapting to the R5," says Whittock. "[That's] because you have to use the suspension travel to your advantage. On the brakes you have to make it grip and it'll help the turn-in, so we made quite a lot of set-up changes to the car but also with those set-up changes it helped his driving style.

"James Morgan also sat in a little bit with him today, and by the end of the test we both said to each other 'If he goes this pace on the rally, he's going to win the BTRDA'. There's no problem about that, if he goes that pace on a stage, he'll win it.

"He's definitely ready for the car, there's no doubt about that. We've just got to work a little bit on the pacenotes with him, just making them a bit more detailed because everything comes up so quick you need to know those details for those cars. But yeah in terms of his driving there's no issue that [means] he won't be able to drive the car or anything like that."

Tom agrees that creating better pacenotes is something to work on. "I think there's still some more development I can do on my notes which would probably give me a little bit of time, gain a bit of pace," he says, before diving into more detail about how that worked in practice at Walters Arena.

"They'd actually changed the loop a little bit so I drove some roads I'd never used before so that was really, really good. We made notes, did two passes like you'd do on a recce and went out on the first lap and drove it kind of like you would on a rally to try and get that feeling again. And for me they worked quite well and I was quite happy with them, but you can always develop your notes.

"At the start of the day, driving technique-wise I was still a little bit in the Escort mindset," he adds. "I was trying to feed the throttle mid-corner a little bit whereas this car, you hit the apex and you've just got to plant it to pull yourself round the corner. By the end of the day I felt I'm pretty much gelled now to that driving style for the four-wheel-drive car."

So what about the car? The Mitsubishi Mirage – although built to R5 specification – was never homologated by the FIA and has therefore been something of a stranger on the British stages compared to the sea of Fiestas currently in competition. That's not to say the car is a slouch though. In Jamie Jukes' hands it has won rallies, most notably the 2018 Pokerstars on the Isle of Man, and it almost won the Nicky Grist Stages with Tom Cave against soon-to-be British and BTRDA champion Matt Edwards that same year too.

The Mirage has been sold and developed by Spencer Sport in this country, and the team is on-hand to support Llewellin's programme this year.

Team principal Charlie Jukes says: "We're expecting it to be very competitive in Tom's hands to be fair. We're expecting good things [but] we'll see. He's obviously new to it, new to four-wheel-drive, [has] done a bit of testing but until we all get out and do a rally we're not going to know.

"He's a really, really good lad and we're super glad to have him in the car and see what he can do. He's very grown up [and offers] very good feedback as a driver as well and that's been really helpful to move the car on to what he wants which has saved us a lot of time. He's done a fair bit of testing now, the car's run faultlessly so we'll see what happens."

The package seems just about perfect then; it's now time to see if it can all harmonise. Tom isn't targeting wins from the off. He says: "Towards the end of the season, I'm going to want to be pushing to be up on top with the top boys."

Is he under-selling himself there? Dad suspects so. "In my experience with Tom coming through juniors and into an Escort he does like to know a car well before he pushes it to the full limit. But I rode with the car in him today, and he's going pretty bloody quickly I can tell you that!" laughs the 1989 and '90 British Rally champion. "I would say he's becoming quite comfortable with the car already. He's a natural driver and he won't take long to be on the pace I'm sure."

Whittock has no concerns either. "I think with the right programme and the right budget, not pushing him on too fast or too quick, he can go as far as he wants to go to be honest," he enthuses. "The natural talent is there. The natural raw talent and raw speed is there as much as it is in Chris [Ingram], I just think with Tom he has more support from other people than Chris had when he was coming up through which probably will help Tom a little bit more because he's very calm and relaxed in the car, nothing else really fazes him and I think that's all come through Dai."

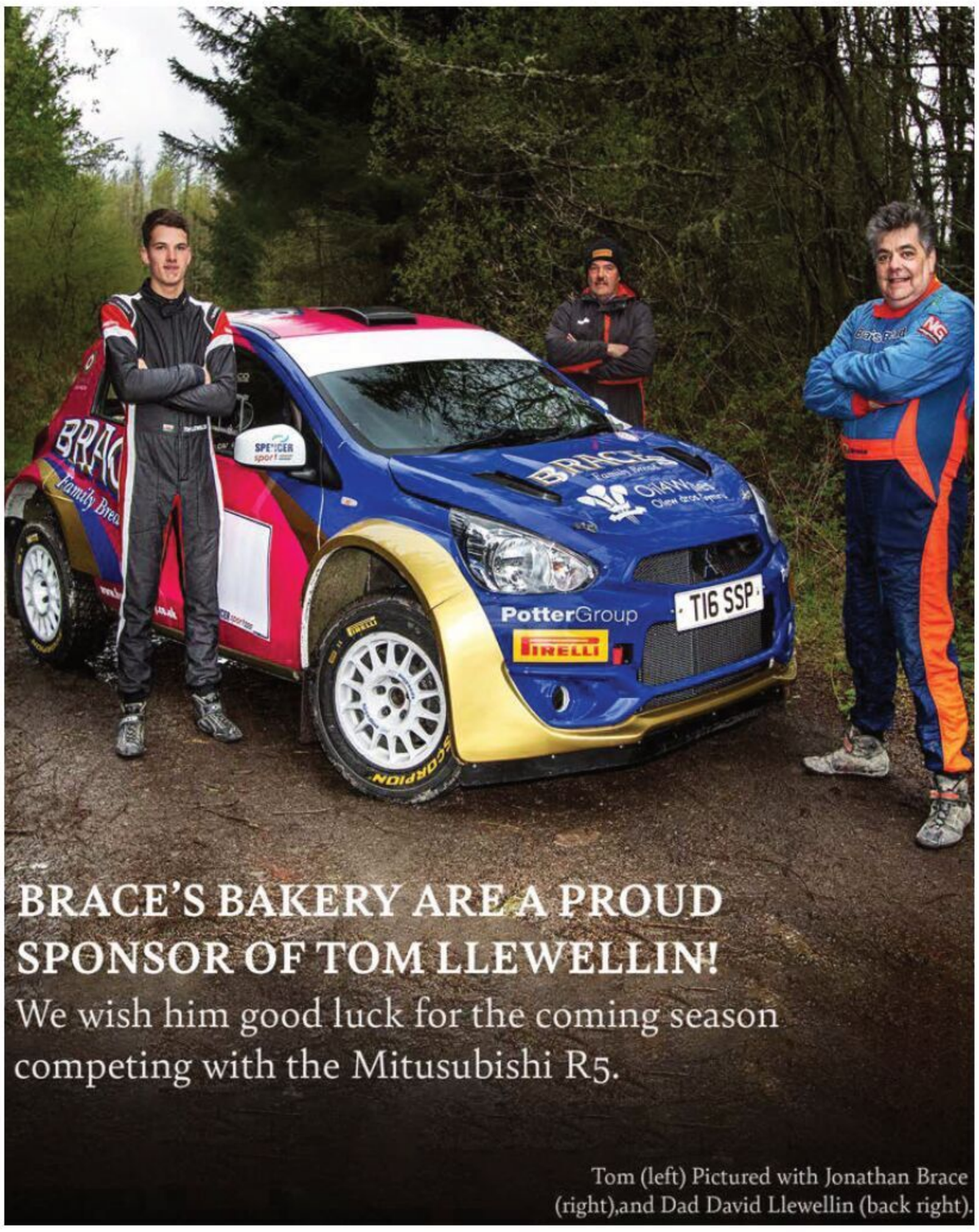
That family link does place some expectation on Tom's young shoulders – "definitely people know who I am because of my dad. The name is big already, so people expect a lot from me, now" – but he insists he isn't feeling any pressure to deliver the first Llewellin rally victory since the 2012 Neath Valley Historic Stages.

"I think naturally there is pressure with the name isn't there but Tom's very good at absorbing all that," says David. "But probably him playing it down is me saying 'look just go and enjoy the car, enjoy driving it and if it all works well, the results are going to come'. We're enjoying it as father and son and I'm trying to pass on my experience to help him up the ladder as quickly as we can. We wanted to get him in a four-wheel-drive car as soon as we could to get that experience and let's hope we can go and do some rallies."

Amen to that. ■

> **"I feel like I can do what I want with the car"**
>
> **Tom Llewellin**

Learning was done in an Escort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Tom (left) Pictured with Jonathan Brace
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RACING REPORTS

Photos: Sam Clennell

BTRDA CLUBMANS RALLYCROSS: LYDDEN HILL BY HAL RIDGE — MAY 8

TOUGH NUT BLEASDALE HEADS HOME THE SUPER MODIFIED RUNNERS AT LYDDEN HILL

Bleasdale withstood heavy pressure from the BMW of Woloch to win Super Modified

Harru Vaulkhard took his joker and that helped him win the Production Class battles

The three best races of the day in the opening round of the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Series at Lydden Hill came at the very end, as Jason Bleasdale, Harry Vaulkhard and Caitlin May emerged on top to claim victory in the Super Modified, Production and Junior categories respectively.

BMW M3 racer Slawomir Woloch claimed pole for the Super Modified A final and led on lap one, but a mistake at the North Bend hairpin on the opening tour allowed Bleasdale the opportunity to seize the lead with his Vauxhall VX220. While Woloch continued to apply constant pressure for the six-lap encounter, he had to settle for second. Fred Ling finished third in a Ford Fiesta, while one of the drives of the day was delivered by Oliver Foord (BMW Mini), who executed a brave move around the outside of Stanley Bovill's rear-wheel-drive Ford Escort at Paddock bend in the latter stages of the race for track position and finished fourth.

Five drivers were embroiled in a race-long battle for the podium in the Production final, in which former World Touring Car Championship driver Harry Vaulkhard traded places for the lead with James Orton in the opening stages. Maciej Florczak ultimately crossed the finish line first in his Peugeot 106, but having forgotten the take the joker, victory went the way of Vaulkhard. The Citroen Saxo driver had to repass 106 driver Rory Denning for the lead in the closing stages. Orton was third and Karl Jarvis finished fourth.

Caitlin May is the latest young talent to be taken under the wing of title-winning driver and World Rallycross-winning engineer Graham Rodemark, following in the footsteps of Kevin Hansen, Nathan Heathcote and Patrick O'Donovan. She won the Junior final from third on the grid in her Suzuki Swift.

May took her joker on lap one, followed by Corey Padgett, and picked off fellow Swift driver Owen Robbins when the second-place runner took his joker on the penultimate tour. Kacper Potra had led up front from pole position but picked up a right-rear puncture on the penultimate lap.

While the Citroen Saxo driver did a good job to minimise the time loss, he exited the final-lap joker behind May. As May went on to win, Potra was kept busy fending off Robbins for second.

Vince Bristow won the Classic final while Bradley Simpson dominated Production 4x4 with his Mitsubishi Evo and Suzuki racer Max Weatherly won the Modified class.

Results

Round 1: Super Modified: 1 Jason Bleasdale (Vauxhall VX220) 4m44.919s; 2 Slawomir Woloch (BMW M3) +2.984s; 3 Fred Ling (Ford Fiesta); 4 Oliver Foord (BMW Mini); 5 Paul Johnson (BMW M3); 6 Stanley Bovill (Ford Escort). **Production:** Harry Vaulkhard (Citroen Saxo); **Junior:** Caitlin May (Suzuki Swift); **Production 4x4:** Bradley Sampson (Mitsubishi Evo); **Modified:** Max Weatherly (Suzuki Swift); **Classic:** Vince Bristow (BMW 318i).

CASTLE COMBE: CCRC BY MARCUS PYE — MAY 3

ADAMS WINS BEFORE MONSOON HITS

Tim Adams – son of 1989 World Sport Prototype Group C2 champion Nick – conquered strong opposition and rampaging winds to score his first race win in Castle Combe's Hot Hatch series on Bank Holiday Monday.

The Honda Civic driver completed a 3-2-1 sequence as Easter Monday's victors Jordan Curnow and Chris Southcott retired.

Saloon king Gary Prebble's 550bhp Seat Leon Cupra turbo was only sixth into Quarry after another faltering getaway, but he rounded younger brother Adam's Vauxhall Astra turbo in the spray at Camp to seize the initiative and win. The Audi TTs of Alex Kite and Tony Hutchings led the chase.

Oliver White extended his unbeaten FF1600 run to three races this term, leaving polesitter Felix Fisher (Ray GR05) scrabbling for grip at the start. Fisher jostled back to second ahead of Nathan Ward, whose pristine 1992 Swift's mirrors were filled with double champions Luke Cooper (Swift SC18) and Adam Higgins (Firman RF21).

Reigning GT champion Tony Bennett (Caterham R300) shot ahead of poleman Ollie Bull, who quickly re-established the status quo. Intrepid Ulsterman Alan Hamilton (Westfield-Duratec) wrestled third from Dominic Shepherd in his Nissan V6-engined tubeframe Audi clone.

The M3s that headed the 750MC's BMWCC field were spectacular. Brad Sheehan aced the dry opener, repelling Niall Bradley, but motorcycle racing returnee Lee Piercey trumped them in the monsoon.

Past master Ben Short looked like a pro among amateurs as he dominated the Mazda MX-5 triple-banger, including its soggy finale from eighth on the partially-reversed grid. Michael Comber was his most consistent rival, defending double champion Ben Hancy having fallen from second to eighth in the wet.

Tim Adams headed the Honda rout in the Hot Hatches

Dan Ludlow and Stuart Emmett were overjoyed to win the annual Dave Allan Trophy race in their Synchro Motorsport Honda Civic Type R, early leader Will Powell having spun Dave Scaramanga's Seat Cupra TCR at Camp. Behind them, Gary Franks (Mini Cooper S R53) finished third.

Photos: Steve Jones

RACE WINNERS

CCRC Hot Hatch Challenge
Tim Adams (Honda Civic)

CCRC Saloon Cars
Gary Prebble (Seat Leon Cupra 20V Turbo)

CCRC Formula Ford
Oli White (Medina Sport JL17K)

CCRC GT
Oliver Bull (Tigra-Ford Ecoboost)

BMW Car Club
Race 1: Brad Sheehan (E46 M3)
Race 2: Lee Piercey (E36 M3)

Mazda MX-5
Races 1,2&3: Ben Short

Dave Allan Trophy
Dan Ludlow/Stuart Emmett (Honda Civic Type R)

JIGGERS JUG SPORTING TRIAL: BY DUNCAN STEPHENS

NEAR PERFECT OUTING FOR RETURNEE BRICKNELL LANDS THE OVERALL GLORY ON CUMBRIAN HILLS

In only his second event returning to motorsport Thomas Bricknell proved why he's a double British champion to win the Jiggers Jug Sporting Trial, dropping just two points.

Conditions varied wildly with torrential rain before the start and later sunshine not altering the sections much. Local trickling expert Mike Salton proved to be Bricknell's main challenger all day to finish just three points back and a single mark ahead of Irishman David Webster.

Martin Grimwood had a brilliant day to finish in fourth place, with 'Tiger' Bill Rhodes consistent in fifth and Bryan Walker sixth after a very costly nine on the first round. Richard Sharp was left scratching his head on the same section dropping a 10, half his total score for the day, managing to recover to seventh overall, with George Watson eighth.

Darren Underwood, in ninth place overall, won the intermediate independent class in from John Cole, andAndrew Woodhead completed the top 10 overall and best live-axle class car. Sam Beare made the long journey from Sussex to win the intermediate live-axle class just behind the best Rookie Ian Blease-Dudley both driving similar Sherpas.

Results

Jiggers Jug Sporting Trial
Organiser: Northern Phoenix Car Trials Club **When:** May 2 **Where:** Penrith, Cumbria **Starters:** 23
1 Thomas Bricknell (Crossle) 2 points; 2 Mike Salton (Hamilton) 5 points; 3 David Webster (Crossle); 4 Martin Grimwood (Crossle); 5 Bill Rhodes (Cartwright); 6 Bryan Walker (Jedi); 7 Richard Sharp (Cartwright); 8 George Watson (Hamilton); 9 Darren Underwood (Crossle); 10 Andrew Woodhead (Concord).

RAYMOND BAXTER SPORTING TRIAL: BY DUNCAN STEPHENS

SALTON BEATS HIS OLD CHASSIS TO CLAIM THE WEEKEND'S SILVERWARE ON BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY

Mike Salton won the Raymond Baxter Sporting Trial on Bank Holiday Monday with a near perfect day.

He dropped just a single point on his way to collecting the Hepplewaite Trophy for aggregate scores over the two days of events in Cumbria.

Darren Underwood was Salton's nearest challenger, dropping the same point on the first round, but soon fell back. That allowed Andrew Woodhead to finish as closest challenger, in Salton's old car.

He beat reigning Gold Star champion Bryan Walker on a tie-break on eight points. The previous day's winner, Thomas Bricknell, could only manage fourth overall as he had slowly let odd points slip away.

Irish driver David Webster finished in fifth, ahead of Richard Sharp who had a better day in sixth beating fellow Cartwright driver Bill Rhodes.

Relative newcomer John Firth won the intermediate live-axle class, beating Bob Packham to eighth overall on a tie-break in his similar vintage Kincraft. George Watson completed the top 10 as the event finished early due to rain.

Underwood won the intermediate independent class and Ian Blease-Dudley the rookie class.

Results

Raymond Baxter Sporting Trial
Organiser: Northern Phoenix Car Trials Club **When:** May 3 **Where:** Penrith, Cumbria **Starters:** 22
1 Mike Salton (Hamilton) 1 point; 2 Andrew Woodhead (Concord) 8 points; 3 Bryan Walker (Jedi); 4 Thomas Bricknell (Crossle); 5 David Webster (Crossle); 6 Richard Sharp (Cartwright); 7 Bill Rhodes (Cartwright); 8 John Firth (SRB); 9 Bob Packham (Kincraft); 10 George Watson (Hamilton).

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RACING REPORTS

BRANDS HATCH: MSVR BY BRIAN PHILLIPS — MAY 8-9

Photos: Gary Hawkins

Matt Bell won twice in Radical SR1

RACE WINNERS

Sports 2000 Championship
Race 1: Joshua Law (MCR S2); **Race 2:** Michael Gibbins (MCR S2)

Radical Challenge Championship
Races 1&2: Matt Bell (SR3); **Race 3:** Mark Richards (SR3)

Radical SR1 Cup
Races 1&2: Will Hunt

Monoposto
Races 1&2: Dan Gore (Jedi Mk6)

MSV Supercup
Darren Goes (Seat Leon)

Bernie's Sports Racing & V8s/Porsche Trophy
Jonathan Evans (Porsche Cayman S)

Z Cars/New Generation BMW/ Prodution GTi
Race 1: Simon Hill (VW Golf GTi Mk5); **Race 2:** Martyn Walsh (VW Golf GTi Mk5)

Racing Saloons/ Production

Golf & BMW
Races 1&2: Nigel Innes (BMW M3)

Southern Saloon Car Series
Races 1&2: Rod Birley (Ford Escort WRC)

MSVR Allcomers
Races 1&2: Scott Mittell (Mittell MC-41RR)

GIBBINS GETS HIS MOJO BACK IN SPORTS 2000 BATTLES

Michael Gibbins returned to the top spot in Sports 2000

Michael Gibbins returned to winning form at round two of this year's Sports 2000 championship on the long circuit.

Untouchable in 2020, Gibbins suffered a disastrous start to the new campaign at Donington, but put the problems behind him in Kent. The MCR driver finished Saturday's damp race a close second to Josh Law's MCR after overcoming fast starter Dominic Lesniewski (MCR). Lesniewski was third despite still nursing damage from a qualifying excursion. Fourth man Tom Stoten's Gunn had a spin.

Things got even better for Gibbins in the dry on Sunday, with a lights-to-flag victory despite some backmarker traffic problems near the end. Stoten was second and Law a threatening third as Lesniewski slipped back. The action in the Pinto class was close on both days, Paul Streat (Lola T87/90) and Chris Snowdon (Tiga SC81) taking a win each.

Matt Bell (SR3) swept to dominant wins in both Radical Challenge sprint races on Saturday. He was helped by Snetterton double winner Jerome de Sadeleer retiring from race one with a damaged car. De Sadeleer was third in race two.

Sunday's 45-minute enduro brought a new winner in the form of Mark Richards. De Sadeleer and Bell ran together ahead of the rest until the pitstops, where success penalties dropped both of them back. De Sadeleer passed Jason Rishover for second, but Bell couldn't do the same and finished fourth.

In the separate Radical SR1 Cup Will Hunt retained his 100% success record so far this year, despite a gravel trap visit in wet qualifying.

A rain-affected grid and a field just short of 40 cars promised plenty of action among the Monopostos, but third row starter Dan Gore (Jedi) didn't get involved, storming to an easy win on Saturday. He repeated the feat on Sunday. Dallara F3 class rivals Chris Davison, Simon Tate and Jason Timms were closely matched in the next three places on Saturday, and the following day James Drew-Williams (Lola) and Lee Fern (Dallara) finished a length apart in second and third.

Five cars ran together as pitstop time approached in the MSV Supercup, but Darren Goes (Seat Leon) emerged with a useful lead. However, he had defending champions Nick Jackson and Ollie Pidgley (Seat) closing fast when the action ended early after Barrie Culley crashed his Cupra.

A perfectly timed pitstop earned Jonathan Evans (Porsche Cayman) victory in the combined Bernie's V8s and Porsche Trophy, which attracted 40-plus cars. He stopped at the first opportunity under caution while the four ahead of him carried on for a lap, and a second safety car intervention helped to seal the success.

Three VW Golfs dominated the first Production GTi/Z Cars race until Simon Vercoe plunged off at Paddock, leaving Simon Hill to lead home Martyn Walsh. Best of the BMW Z4 class was the car driven by Chris Murphy. Out of sight on the final lap of race two, Walsh grabbed the lead from Hill, and Murphy won his class again.

DONINGTON PARK: BRSCC BY MARK PAULSON — MAY 8-9

NUTTALL PROVES TO BE A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

Photos: Mick Walker

Nuttall took two wnis in Caterhams

Stephen Nuttall set out his stall as the man to beat in this year's Caterham Seven UK championship with two wins and a second at Donington Park.

The newly adopted slick tyres weren't required in Saturday's opener as Nuttall splashed to victory from Henry Heaton and Gordon Sawyer. Yellow flags then thwarted Nuttall's planned last-gasp attack on James Murphy in a drier race two, before he survived contact with Sawyer to win the third from 310R graduates Greg Monks and Murphy. Pete Walters (twice) and Lars Hoffmann were victorious in the concurrent 310R races.

Caterham Academy champions Taylor O'Flanagan and Tom Cockerill split the wins in two action-packed Roadsports races in which Domenique Mannsperger and Hugo Bush also starred, while the 270R sessions were claimed by Will Rossetti and, in dominant fashion, Blair McConachie.

Kevin Mills Racing will be eyeing back-to-back Formula Ford National championship crowns after new recruit Alex Walker was a double winner on Sunday. Having qualified only seventh in the worst of Saturday's wet weather, Walker climbed to third in the first race as conditions improved.

He then quickly hit the front in race two and was untroubled by a mid-race safety car, before starting the reversed-grid encounter from eighth. Third within half a lap, he then topped a tasty scrap with Luke Cooper's Swift and the Medina of Rory Smith for his second win. Festival winner Smith had claimed the opener before getting shuffled back after contact with team-mate Jamie Sharp in race two. Low Dempsey Racing's Max Esterson was another teenager to impress, with two feisty podiums, while FF1600 veterans Chris Middlehurst and Joey Foster endured a catalogue of woe in all three races.

Dave Cockell was denied a double victory in Modified Fords when his Escort Cosworth's gearstick broke in the opener. He then thundered through from the back of the grid in the sequel, passing race one winner Wayne Crabtree – in Dave Abrahams' Subaru-powered RS200 – soon after half distance.

In its first weekend as a fully-fledged championship, the CityCar Cup had 23 novices among its 38-car field but it was veteran Pickup racer Nic Grindrod who scored a brace of dominant victories.

Preferring the less greasy conditions of the race, Rob Fenn's Lotus Elan won the AMOC Jack Fairman/Innes Ireland Cups race from fifth on the grid, chased home by Ian Dalglish's Lotus 17. Nigel Jenkins' Ferrari 458 was untroubled in the GT encounter.

RACE WINNERS

Caterham Seven UK/310R
Races 1&3: Stephen Nuttall (420R); **Race 2:** James Murphy (420R)

Caterham Roadsport
Race 1: Taylor O'Flanagan; **Race 2:** Tom Cockerill

Caterham 270R
Race 1: Will Rossetti; **Race 2:** Blair McConachie

National Formula Ford
Race 1: Rory Smith (Medina JL18); **Races 2&3:** Alex Walker (Spectrum 011C)

Modified Fords
Race 1: Wayne Crabtree (Ford RS200-Subaru); **Race 2:** Dave Cockell (Ford Escort Cosworth)

CityCar Cup
Races 1&2: Nic Grindrod (Citroen C1)

AMOC Jack Fairman Cup/ Innes Ireland Cup/Mike Hawthorn Trophy
Rob Fenn (Lotus Elan)

AMOC GT/GT4/ Intermarque
Nigel Jenkins (Ferrari 458)

Fun Cup
UVio/Hofmann's Lotus (Farquini Deott/Fabio Randaccio)

SNETTERTON: BARC BY LEWIS BEALES — MAY 8-9

SAFETY CAR HELPS DHILLON PUT LAMBO PAIR IN THEIR PLACE

Photo: Richard Styles

Dhillon's Ferrari 488 prevailed

John Seale and Jamie Stanley were denied a clean sweep in the Britcar Enduro races by Ferrari driver John Dhillon who profited from a mid-race safety car that left him with an unassailable lead in the opening event.

In race two, the Seale/Stanley duo found themselves in second place after changing drivers during an early safety car interlude, and the latter passed Danny Harrison's Nissan GT3 for first with an audacious move at Agostini.

A pitlane speeding penalty dropped the BMW of Jasver Sapra out of the Britcar Trophy lead allowing the similar car of Oliver Reuben to nip by Mark Lee on the penultimate lap to clinch victory.

In race two, Reuben's co-driver Steven Baker was coasting to victory until Lee pounced at the final corner to snatch the lead but his Ginetta was left breathless in the race to the finish line which reversed the order again.

Andrew Jordan's choice of slick tyres for the first Mini Miglia race enabled him to ease to a comfortable victory while he again shone on a rain-affected track to win race two, having started from eighth place.

Shane Stoney pounced on Wayne Rockett's error at Agostini to take victory in the Hyundai Coupe Cup while a half spin by Jamie Winrow on the final lap of the first Caterham Sigmax race promoted Jamie Ellwood to victory with the positions reversed in race two.

Harry Senior dominated the first Caterham Sigmax race but he was made to work much harder for victory in race two while former BTCC man Jeff Smith dominated both Mini Se7en encounters. Charlie Hand displaced Alfie Jeakins, suffering from a clutch issue, in the first Junior Saloon race to take an easy win and repeated the feat in race two.

RACE WINNERS

Britcar Enduro
Race 1: John Dhillon (Ferrari 488 Challenge); **Race 2:** John Seale/ Jamie Stanley (Lamborghini Huracan GT3)

Britcar Trophy
Race 1&2: Steve Baker/Oliver Reuben (BMW 1 Series)

Mini Miglia Challenge
Race 1&2: Andrew Jordan

Hyundai Coupe Cup
Shane Stoney

Caterham Graduates, Sigma 150
Race 1: Jamie Ellwood; **Race 2:** Jamie Winrow

Caterham Graduates, Sigmax/Sigma 135
Race 1&2: Harry Senior/David Read

Mini Se7en Challenge
Race 1&2: Jeff Smith

Junior Saloon Car Championship
Race 1&2: Charlie Hand

Superkarts
Race 1, 2&3: Liam Morley (Anderson/ VM)

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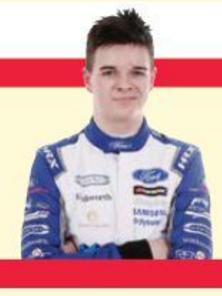
ZAK O'SULLIVAN



Sixteen-year-old British F4 runner-up is all set for his next step in BRDC F3

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

F3 preparations are going well

The 16-year-old admits surprise at F3 car's pace

This year I am stepping up to BRDC British Formula 3, still with the Carlin team that I finished a very close runner-up in British Formula 4 with last year, and preparations are going pretty well.

The F3 car is a surprising step up pace-wise. Adapting to the car was a bit tricky when I first started testing but we've made good progress. It turns out it's slightly quicker than the Formula Alpine cars, after the new aero kit changes, which we were a bit shocked about, so it's taken a bit of adaptation. Adapting to the aero in higher-speed corners hasn't been so much of an issue, it's more that the British F3 car's got very effective yet quite odd braking capabilities.

I still don't know how fast we're going to be come the start of the season, which is later this month at the Brands Hatch British GT meeting. The best way to find out is after round one's qualifying. There have been a few days where we've had a majority of the British F3 grid testing together. We look relatively fast but as I've seen in the past testing is really nothing to go by.

For assessing likely rivals, I'd mainly go team wise and then therefore look at the drivers in those cars. Hitech is of course a dominant force in junior single-seater racing and it finished second last year in its inaugural BRDC F3 season so I would expect it to make some gains over the winter and be quite a close threat. Arden also has joined BRDC F3 this year, it's an established team so I would expect it to be up there pretty quickly as well.

Last year's British F4 campaign was my first season in single-seaters. I went in with no particular aims and in the end I was just four points away from winning the title. My approach seemed to work relatively well, so the same approach will be applied again in BRDC F3 this year.

There's slightly less learning to do now I've done a season in single-seaters, but there's still some work. So early on for me it's just about settling into the championship with no real expectations or hopes. Then you can make any judgements after the first couple of rounds and goals can be set.

Last year's F4 title finale at Brands was dramatic: I missed out when the final race was stopped early for rain and half points were awarded. I think the term is 'it is what it is'! It's gone now, one of those things, Mother Nature didn't like me that afternoon! The rain came at an awkward time, equally I made a little mistake in race two so I put myself on the back foot slightly.

O'Sullivan didn't dwell on his British F4 near miss

The title was there to win but I'm not too fussed really, finishing second isn't the biggest disaster, as long as I was up there and could prove my worth throughout the year that was good. And from the end of the weekend, on Monday morning I was at Carlin doing a seat fit for some simulator stuff for F3, so it was 'forget about that, switch on to the next step and start planning for F3'!

Even though I'm staying with Carlin this year there's no overlapping personnel between the two years, apart from my engineer Anthony Grenier who I'm taking with me from F4 to F3. We gelled well last year, he's done a year or two in F3 before, and it's always good to keep some of the same faces around you. It also meant there was no delay in starting to develop myself in the F3 car, I already had a platform and my engineer knew areas that I could work on in F4 could correlate into F3, which they have done.

Throughout my career I've only had one or two years where I've repeated the same category, so ideally I want to keep on progressing and not halt at any point on the ladder. You don't want to get stuck in a series for too long and if you can keep on progressing through the ranks and adapting you learn a lot more. It looks more impressive from the outside as well.

After this year FIA F3 would be my next logical step, though it's dependent on how this year goes. I can make a better judgement halfway through this season. FIA F3 is also a big financial investment and quite a tricky championship.

But it's a great learning tool: you're on the F1 stage, no testing at all, barely any practice, the hardest tyres. So if you can succeed in that then you know you've done a good job and you've got a pretty good case for the rest of your career.

"On the Monday morning after the F4 finale I was doing a seat fit for F3!"

WHAT'S ON

YOUTUBE

For this week's YouTube delve we head back to the 2015 Goodwood Revival, and a race that sober observers reckoned the best in the event's history. It's the St Mary's Trophy all-star saloon race, and one of the stars is our readers' Q&A guest this week, nine-time Le Mans winner Tom Kristensen. Thanks to a carburettor fault on his imposing Ford Fairlane Thunderbolt he started last of the 29-car field, in a car he'd never completed a flying lap in.

But come the race, as noted in the commentary, he "made a mockery" of such drawbacks, charging through in no time. Eventually he closed up on a three-car lead battle of Frank Stippler's Alfa Romeo plus a Ford Cortina pair driven by Gordon Shedden and Andrew Jordan. And on a single lap Kristensen passed them all.

And Goodwood's YouTube channel lets you watch this particular lap of the gods, plus Kristensen drifting his Thunderbolt and shaving the grass on his way to victory, all at a bright Goodwood circuit in front of packed grandstands that hopefully are not far off becoming reality once again. It's at youtube.com/watch?v=o25ats_KXRk or you can search 'Kristensen goes from 4th to 1st in one lap'.

Graham Keilloh

Kristensen: on the edge

TV GUIDE

To quote the late Clive James: "as they say nowadays with increasing frequency, the Monaco Grand Prix makes a nice change from grand prix racing".

But for all the place is hardly designed for the modern Formula 1 car, Monaco also has an uncanny knack of being the scene of drama. And with the latest event a week away Sky Sports F1 has some retro action to whet appetites.

The tight and frantic 2003 race is shown in full on Saturday evening (2200hrs-0015hrs), on Sunday the 2011 version is also shown in its entirety (2000hrs-2300hrs) and on Monday it's the full sodden 2008 race (2000hrs-2230hrs). They then switch to highlights with on Tuesday the madcap 1982 event (2000hrs-2040hrs) then on Wednesday the '83 race (2030hrs-2100hrs).

And with Monaco's weekend kicking off as usual a day early, on Thursday, Sky F1's race weekend coverage starts up next Wednesday with The F1 Show (1700hrs-1800hrs) then the drivers' press conference (1800hrs-1930hrs).

If you miss this weekend's IndyCar race at the Indianapolis road course Sky Sports F1 has highlights on Tuesday evening (2100hrs-2200hrs) and again on early Wednesday (0000hrs-0100hrs). You similarly can catch up with last weekend's V8 Supercars action from The Bend (Monday, 1130hrs-1230hrs and 1230hrs-1330hrs, BT Sport 2).

Graham Keilloh

Relive Monaco's glories

LIVE TV

INDYCAR
INDIANAPOLIS ROAD COURSE
■ **Race:** Saturday, 1930hrs-2200hrs, Sky Sports F1

NASCAR
DOVER
■ **Race:** Sunday, 1830hrs-2330hrs, Premier Sports 2

LISTINGS

SATURDAY-SUNDAY

■ **Silverstone, Northants**
MSVR meeting: F3 Cup, Heritage FF1600, Elise Trophy, Clubmans, Trackday Championship, Trackday Trophy, Allcomers, Focus Cup, Ecurie Classic **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1140hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1100hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs)
NO SPECTATORS

■ **Brands Hatch, Kent**
MSVR meeting: Ferrari Challenge, Ferrari Classic **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1500hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1500hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs)
NO SPECTATORS

■ **Croft, N Yorks**
BRSCC meeting: Mazda MX-5, Mazda MX-5 Super Cup, Mazda MX-5 Mk4, BMW Compact Cup, BRSCC Clubsport, Fiesta, Fiesta Junior, ST-XR Challenge Starts Saturday, racing from 1325hrs (qualifying from 0930hrs) Sunday, racing from 1235hrs (qualifying from 1205hrs)
NO SPECTATORS

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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!

Justin Ward's photograph of a Lotus pushing hard, taken at Snetteton last season

Rich Cranston's shot of glorious Arrows

Saleen headed for impact at Combe, by Neil Ormston

Dean Chilvers, from the Dubai 24 Hours

Tom Kristensen slide, by David Harbey

NEXT WEEK — OUT THURSDAY, MAY 20

*Correct at time of going to press

READERS' Q&A: BOBBY RAHAL

North American racing legend tackles the MN readers' posers

WHAT NEXT FOR A RAMPANT RED BULL?

We look at the future for Max's team in Formula 1

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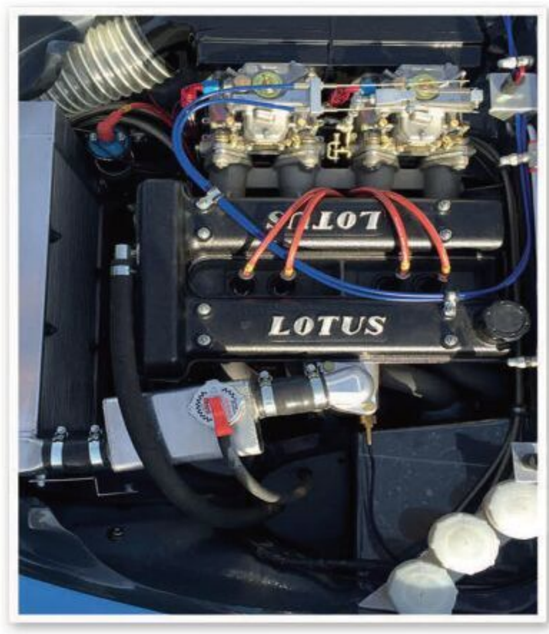

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